

Field, Dawn

From: Fox, Susan
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 3:27 PM
To: LEG LSD LEPO
Subject: FW: Paramount Trail EA for Makoshika State Park
Attachments: EA - Paramount Trail Draft.docx

Susan Byorth Fox

(406) 444-3066
sfox@mt.gov

From: Powell, Nathan
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 2:53 PM
To: Valle, Paul; Williams, Kelly; Furthmyre, Coleen; Durran, Candace; 'McRae, Debbie'; Windon, Jacqueline; Geary, Laura; Gangstad, Kaedy; Zackheim, Hugh; blovelace@mt.gov; jellis@mtaudubon.org; dchadwick@mtwf.org; Shovers, Brian; Fox, Susan; Everts, Todd; Baker, Tim; Wilmoth, Stan; Tubbs, John; buxbaumd@dawsoncountymail.com; gartner@dawsoncountymail.com; skillestadj@dawsoncountymail.com; chamber@midrivers.com; Amy Deines; mayor@midrivers.com; FWP *Reg Supervisors; FWP *Reg/ARO Ofc Mgrs
Cc: Habermann, Doug
Subject: Paramount Trail EA for Makoshika State Park

We are entering the public comment period of our EA for the Paramount Trail at Makoshika State Park. I have attached the EA for your records and comments.

Thank you!



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 14, 2014

CONTACT: Nathan Powell (406) 377-6256

Makoshika State Park Seeks Public Comment on Environmental Assessment for New Recreational Trail

-Comments Due by Friday, February 14-

(Glendive, MT) – Montana State Parks (stateparks.mt.gov) announced today that public comment is being sought on a draft environmental assessment for a proposed new multiple use recreational trail, to be called the Paramount Trail, that will connect Glendive's city sidewalk system to Cains Coulee Campground located 1 mile inside the Makoshika State Park entrance.

The proposed project is an infrastructure improvement intended to expand existing recreational trails within the park, and improve visitor safety so that motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists don't have to share the roadway. The proposed trail distance is 6,425 feet and it will run along the north side of the Makoshika Park Road. The trail will be suitable for non-motorized traffic and is ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant.

Phase 1 of the Paramount Trail will cost approximately \$27,000, paid for through a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) federal grant sponsored by the Friends of Makoshika, a non-profit organization. Phase 1 will include the first ¼ mile of the trail where most of the foot traffic on the roadway currently occurs. It will also provide a continuation to the city trail where bicyclist and pedestrians are crossing paths creating a safety concern because they share the roadway with car traffic, as well. The proposed trail will provide a safe, enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing recreational opportunity to connect the state park with city offerings.

After the development takes place, re-vegetation and noxious weed control measures will be implemented to mitigate any site disturbance associated with the development.

After completion of Phase 1, as funding is available, successive phases will continue to expand the path's length until the 1.18 mile long trail is completed.

The public is encouraged to read the draft environmental assessment and [comment online](#) at stateparks.mt.gov click on "submit public comments" or direct link

here: http://stateparks.mt.gov/news/publicNotices/environmental-assessments/pn_0011.html

Or send comments by mail to Public Comments Makoshika Trail EA, PO Box 1242 Glendive, Montana 59330. If questions contact, Makoshika State Park Manager Nathan Powell at (406) 377-6256.

Public comments will be open for 31 days and are **due by Friday, February 14 at 5pm.**

Join us in celebrating Montana State Parks 75th Anniversary in 2014! Visit Montana State Parks (stateparks.mt.gov) and enjoy camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, boating and more and discover some of the greatest natural and cultural treasures on earth.

Download our new APP! [Montana State Parks Outdoor Guide](#)

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Twitter [@MTStateParks](#)

-###-

A division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

stateparks.mt.gov

Contact:

Nathan Powell,
Park Manager,
Makoshika State Park
(406) 377-6256
napowell@mt.gov

Nathan Powell

Park Manager

Makoshika, Medicine Rocks, Pirogue Island State Parks

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Draft Environmental Assessment

Makoshika State Park Paramount Trail

January 14, 2014



MEPA / NEPA / HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed Action:** Park Capital Improvement

The improvement proposed herein for Makoshika State Park is a multiple use recreational trail connecting Glendive's city sidewalk system to the park. The trail continues on a path following the park's paved road through Cains Coulee to a terminus at Cains Coulee Campground located one mile inside the park entrance.

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has the authority to provide development for public recreation on Department lands (23-1-102 MCA).

3. **Name of Project:** Paramount Trail

4. **Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Friends of Makoshika
PO BOX 1242
Glendive, Montana 59330
(406) 377-5384

Makoshika State Park
1301 Snyder Avenue
Glendive, Montana 59330-1242
(406) 377-6256

5. **If Applicable:**

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: January 2014

Estimated Completion Date of the First Phase: January 2016

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 100%

6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, township and range):**

Dawson County; NE ¼, Sec 2, T15N, R55E, and W ½, Sec 1, T15N, R55E

Legal description(s):

NE ¼, Sec 2, T15N, R55E, and W ½, Sec 1, T15N, R55E of Dawson County, Montana

Total Acres affected: 1.18

7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

- (a) Developed:
 - residential0.00 acres
 - industrial0.00 acres
- (b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation.....1.18 acres
- (c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas.....0.00 acres
- (d) Floodplain.....0.00 acres
- (e) Productive:
 - irrigated cropland.....0.00 acres
 - dry cropland.....0.00 acres
 - forestry.....0.00 acres
 - rangeland.....0.00 acres
 - other.....0.00 acres

8. Map/site plan: See Appendix A; Site Map

9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

The Paramount trail is a recreational trail connecting the existing city trail system to the north end of the Cains Coulee Campground. The distance of the trail is 6,425 feet. The trail will run along the north side of the Makoshika Park Road. The trail will be suitable for non-motorized traffic and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

Construction of the trail will be phased based upon available funding and the final trail design will include fabric underlayment and a packed gravel surface. Trail construction will be confined to a width no greater than eight feet and a depth no greater than six feet when it is completed. Trail design and construction will allow for paving of the trail, if desired and funded in the future. Funding for the first phase of the trail is by a Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant with the Friends of Makoshika as the sponsor.

The initial phase of the proposed project will focus on addressing two problem areas on the trail's intended path: 1) The first ¼ mile of the trail where we generally have the most foot traffic on the road and 2) Provide a continuation to the city trail where bicyclist and pedestrians are crossing paths where safety is a concern. Successive phases will continue to expand the path's length until the 1.18 mile long trail is completed, as well as installing necessary infrastructure elements to ensure user safety and the trail's structural integrity.

The proposed project is intended to expand existing recreational trail offerings within the park, improve visitor safety and visitor comfort. The proposed project is consistent with park management plan objectives as outlined in the park's 2005 Management Plan. Specifically, the trail satisfies the plan's objective of infrastructure improvement through the development of additional trail availability. The plan strengthens community relations through the plan's stated objective and recommended actions of establishing non-

motorized trail connectivity between the city and the park. Establishing a trail is consistent with the planning documents and stated goals of the City of Glendive and the County of Dawson.

The proposed project meets user preferences of Makoshika's visitor base, as evidenced by visitor input and participation in the park's most recent management plan update and input from numerous visitation assessments (see Appendix B: Visitor Preference Assessment Reference List).

Finally the proposed project provides developed recreational opportunities, increasing the diversity of recreational use at a state park, and provides visitors with healthy outdoor participation options in safe and defined areas.

10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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N/A

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
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Phase 1: RTP grant	\$27,000
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(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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City of Glendive – Adjacent Land Owner/Trail Connection Point
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
State Historical Preservation Office – cultural & historical resources

11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana State Parks Trail Coordinator
Friends of Makoshika
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Fish and Wildlife Divisions
State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO)

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <input type="checkbox"/> *				Can Impact Be Mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> *	Comment Index
	Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> *	None	Minor <input type="checkbox"/> *	Potentially Significant		
▶ a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X		Yes	1a
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	1b
▶ c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 1a. The site is located on a sandy, alluvial terrace. Trail construction will be confined to a width no greater than eight feet and a depth no greater than six feet and is mainly associated with establishing the trail surface. Most soil disturbance will be contained to the upper two soil horizons. Post-construction reclamation will address instability resulting from the proposed site development.
- 1b. Proposed work will require removal, movement, and replacement of approximately 22,846 cubic yards of surface soil, constrained to a depth not to exceed 72 inches. The design and construction methods employed will reduce long-term impacts and post-construction site reclamation, including native seeding and landscaping, and will mitigate short-term impacts. Inspection and maintenance programs will be affected to address changes in long-term erosion and drainage patterns.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <input type="checkbox"/> *				Can Impact Be Mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> *	Comment Index
	Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> *	None	Minor <input type="checkbox"/> *	Potentially Significant		
▶ a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ♦For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regulations? (Also see 2a)		N/A				
f. Other		X				

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ^{□*}				Can Impact Be Mitigated ^{□*}	Comment Index
	Unknown ^{□*}	None	Minor ^{□*}	Potentially Significant		
▶ a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		Yes	3a
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		N/A				
m. ♦For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		N/A				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 3b. The drainage characteristics of the site will not significantly change. Surface treatment of the trail will direct runoff faster than the current unpaved condition, but will not result in the removal or redirection of any additional water from the site, nor divert runoff in a manner inconsistent with current drainage patterns. There are ten coulee crossings along the proposed trail, with existing drainage culverts from the existing road. Nine existing road culverts will be used for the trail at nine coulee crossings and one 24" culvert will be installed at the tenth coulee crossing. In addition to the culvert needs for the coulee crossings for the trail, eight 15" culverts will be installed for existing road runoff at four large coulees and ten 12" culverts will be installed at the remaining coulee crossings to manage/divert existing road runoff.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT [☒] ☒				Can Impact Be Mitigated [☒] ☒	Comment Index
	Unknown [☒] ☒	None	Minor [☒] ☒	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4a
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X		Yes	4b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4c
f. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		N/A				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 4a. Development of park facilities and infrastructure will lessen plant productivity and abundance in the immediate areas of the development. Plant diversity will not be affected. Post-construction landscaping and revegetation will increase net plant abundance around the shelter and the group use area in general. Revegetation will include replanting of native plant species and transplanting shrubs to other state parks, including Pictograph State Park.
- 4b. Post-construction landscaping and revegetation around all developments will incorporate native plant species present in the park and will assist in promoting plant health and diversity by way of erosion abatement, nutrient retention and production of beneficial soil organics.
- 4e. Soil disturbance during construction will allow the introduction of unwanted weed species. Landscaping, revegetation and weed control efforts will eliminate the establishment or spread of noxious weeds. FWP has also increased its efforts to control noxious weeds and these additional controls will apply to the construction/development area.

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT [□] *				Can Impact Be Mitigated [□] *	Comment Index
	Unknown [□] *	None	Minor [□] *	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of non-game species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X			5g
h. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		N/A				
i. ♦For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		N/A				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 5g. Wildlife disturbance will be minimal. Disturbance is mainly associated with the crepuscular movement of mule deer from the benches above the site to lower areas in Cains Coulee. Previous site developments along Cains Coulee has shown no extensive long-term impacts on the movement or health of wildlife and initial disturbance levels will decrease as wildlife movement adjusts to long-term human use patterns at the site.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT [□] *				Can Impact Be Mitigated [□] *	Comment Index
	Unknown [□] *	None	Minor [□] *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		No	6a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 6a. The development of a recreational trail will increase and diversify use of Cains Coulee between the park visitor center and Cains Coulee Campground. Specifically, the trail will encourage and provide for non-motorized travel along the existing travel corridor connecting the park entrance to developed recreational opportunities further within the park. These types of activities may include noise levels that exceed levels currently experienced at the site. The trail may reduce vehicle noise as visitors will choose to walk rather than drive.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ^{□*}				Can Impact Be Mitigated ^{□*}	Comment Index
	Unknown ^{□*}	None	Minor ^{□*}	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicts with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				7b
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7b. The Proposed Action compliments the land use directives for Montana State Parks.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ^{□*}				Can Impact Be Mitigated ^{□*}	Comment Index
	Unknown ^{□*}	None	Minor ^{□*}	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				8c
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		N/A				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8c. The trail will allow a safe place for non-motorized travel off the main roadway. Pedestrians currently share the road with motorized traffic; the risk of accidents will be greatly reduced by providing an alternate route for non-motorized traffic. A non-motorized trail will also encourage non-motorized activities within the park. The health benefits of non-motorized activities are endless and will increase as result of the trail.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <input type="checkbox"/> *				Can Impact Be Mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> *	Comment Index
	Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> *	None	Minor <input type="checkbox"/> *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			9e
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9e. The establishment of an additional recreational trail in the park will result in minor increases in visitation to the park. Completion of proposed project will lessen traffic hazards by removing pedestrians and bicyclists from the park roadway.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <input type="checkbox"/> *				Can Impact Be Mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> *	Comment Index
	Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> *	None	Minor <input type="checkbox"/> *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
▶ e. Define projected revenue sources		X				
▶ f. Define projected maintenance costs.			X			
g. Other:		X				

10e. Future maintenance costs will be covered under the existing park operations and maintenance budget.

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ^{☐*}				Can Impact Be Mitigated ^{☐*}	Comment Index
	Unknown ^{☐*}	None	Minor ^{☐*}	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
►c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X		Yes	11c
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		N/A				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. The proposed site improvement will diversify and improve recreational opportunities for Makoshika's visitors. The trail will parallel existing park roadway.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ^{☐*}				Can Impact Be Mitigated ^{☐*}	Comment Index
	Unknown ^{☐*}	None	Minor ^{☐*}	Potentially Significant		
►a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?			X			12a
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		N/A				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. A contracted cultural survey was conducted along the trail on November 7, 2013. The survey results show nothing questionable was encountered.

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT <input type="checkbox"/> *				Can Impact Be Mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> *	Comment Index
	Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> *	None	Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources, which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ♦For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		N/A				
g. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider, and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action: This alternative involves no action by FWP; that is, the State would not develop a recreational trail connecting the adjacent city's sidewalk system and associated trail system with the park. FWP's Parks Division has made a commitment to eastern Montana and Makoshika State Park with respect to increased development and recreational opportunities. No development will leave Makoshika with underdeveloped trail offerings, an area often cited in visitor surveys as a highly desirable form of recreation in the park. Local, state and out-of-state visitors have expressed a need for improvements to Makoshika State Park trail hiking offerings, which this proposed project accomplishes. Existing safety concerns with mixing of motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists on roadway will continue.

Reduced Project Scope: Reducing the total length of the trail would hamper the efforts of the park and local government leaders in providing connectivity of the area's recreational opportunities. Not connecting the trail to the city sidewalk system would cause a separation between available city and park trail systems. Likewise, not connecting the trail to Cains Coulee Campground would cause separation of the proposed trail with an existing trail extension at the campground, namely the Diane Gabriel trail, which would add an additional 1.18 miles of connectivity to the project.

Proposed Project: With the proposed project, a 6,425 ft recreational trail will be created, connecting Glendive's city sidewalk system to Cains Coulee Campground inside Makoshika State Park. Post-development reclamation in the form of revegetation and noxious weed control measures will be affected to mitigate site disturbance associated with the development. Maintenance and impact assessment plans will be initiated to minimize and control long-term use patterns and impacts.

The development will satisfy the public's expressed desire for developed recreational sites within the developed corridor of the park and satisfies the department's desire to provide developed recreational opportunities with land use directives. The trail will provide a safe, enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing recreational opportunity with connectivity to similarly adjacent city offerings. This is our preferred alternative and action.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

N/A

4. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EIS is not required. There will be no significant impacts to the natural or human environment. An EA is sufficient for the analysis of impacts of the proposed action.

5. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

A statewide press release will be conducted. A thirty-day comment period provides involvement by written comment. This level of public involvement is appropriate given the circumstances of this proposal. Considering the project and impacts, this is an adequate level of public involvement.

6. Duration of comment period if any:

Review copies of the EA will be mailed to appropriate agencies, government officials, and nonprofit natural resource groups. The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on the environmental assessment and the proposed action and alternatives:

- 4 legal notices published twice in both these newspapers: *Glendive Ranger Review* and *Helena Independent Record*.
- 1 legal notice on Montana's Website
- 32 day comment period from January 13, 2014 at 8:00am until February 14, 2014 at 5:00pm

7. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Nathan Powell	Doug Habermann
Makoshika State Park	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1301 Snyder Avenue	2300 Lake Elmo Dr
P.O. Box 1242	Billings, MT 59105
Glendive, Montana 59330-1242	406-247-2954
(406) 377-6256	

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The Proposed Action increases trail opportunities in Makoshika State Park and links the park with the City of Glendive's sidewalk system. Expanding the trail system in the park promotes an active lifestyle and a healthy community. With the addition of the trail in the park's trail inventory, operations costs will increase slightly but will be absorbed into the existing repair and maintenance of interpretive trails in the park. The trail is anticipated to be a permanent long-term structure.

This trail provides a safe route for non-motorized travel within the park. This trail parallels our main road and separates motorized and non-motorized traffic. This interest and desire is mirrored by State Parks' desire to provide safe and aesthetically pleasing recreational opportunities. The Glendive community has expressed interest in the continued development of improved recreational facilities at Makoshika State Park. Past development of recreational facilities at Makoshika supports the community's and the department's desire to provide recreational opportunities to visitors. Visitor preferences, as noted by numerous statewide and park-specific surveys and assessments, consistently ranks hiking and interpretive trails as a high priority item of desire when recreating in Montana State Parks.

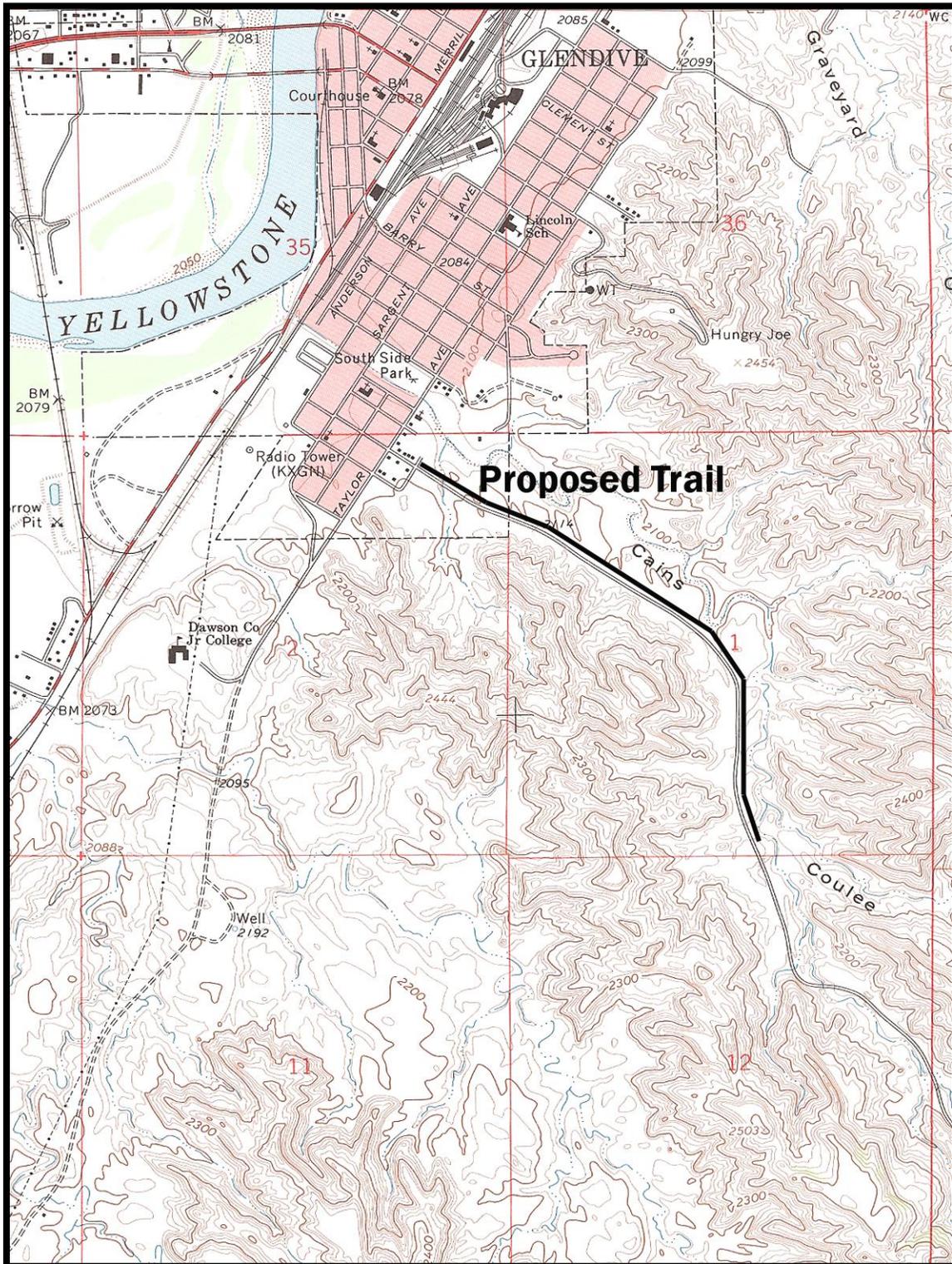
The trail would be constructed along the developed travel corridor of Cains Coulee. Cains Coulee is the location of other developed facilities, including a visitor center, group use shelter, disc golf course, campground, the main road and trailhead for the Diane Gabriel Trail. The site is suitable for development with respect to the physical capacity of the site to withstand the proposed modifications, and the site is considered to have relatively stable soils. The potential for disruption or destruction of significant geological, physical and paleontological resources is low in most areas of consideration and mitigation is available and determined to be suitable to offset such disturbances. The final trail route was professionally surveyed on November 7, 2013 and no cultural resources were found that would be disturbed. No significant changes in air quality are expected. The characteristics of surface water discharge and/or the alteration of surface water quality will not change significantly.

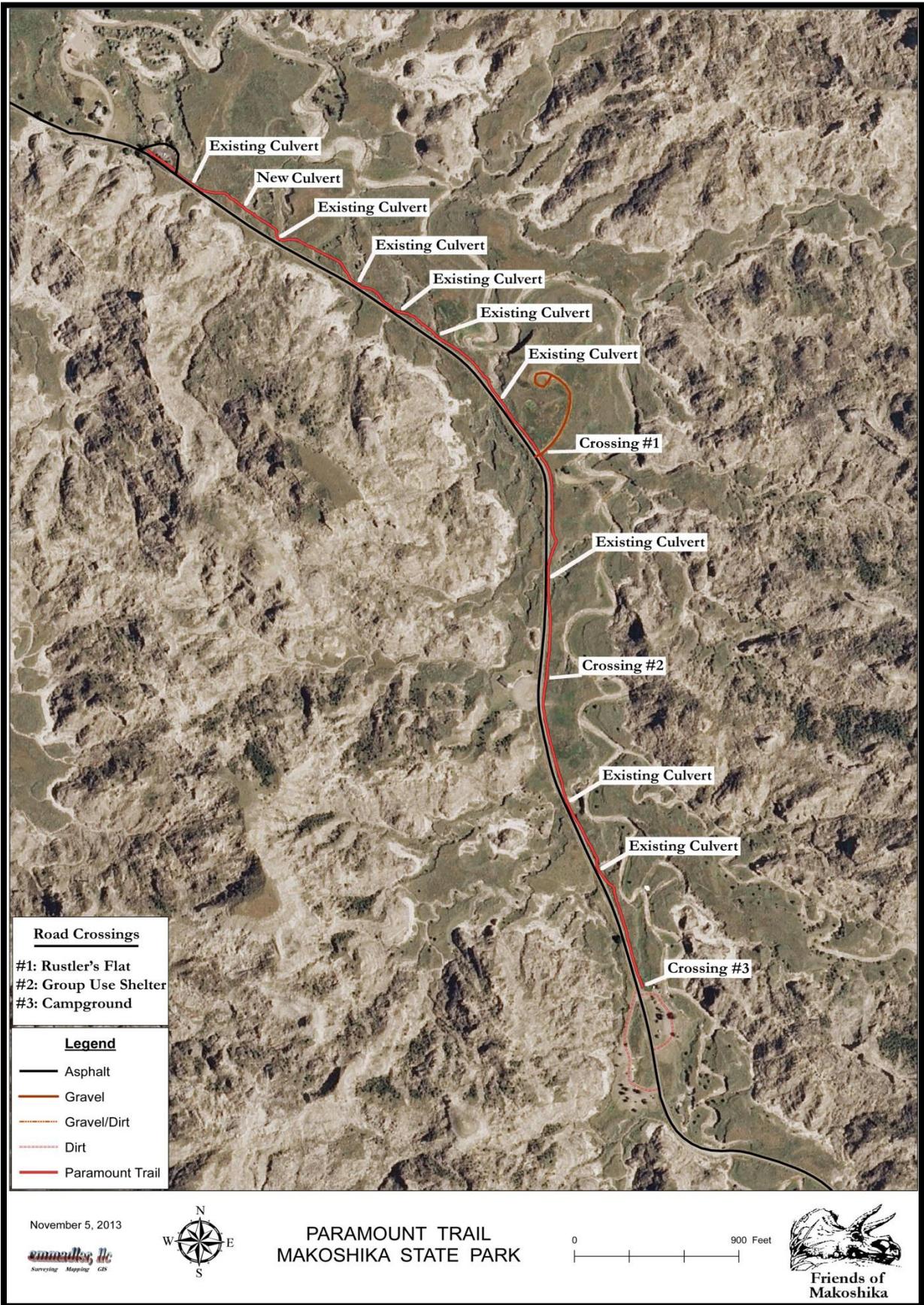
The proposed action is expected to have a positive impact on tourism in Dawson County. Trail development complements the land use directives of the Parks Division and provides an integrated recreational opportunity within Dawson County. It combines the availability of developed recreational facilities with access and proximity to other interpretive and nature-based recreational opportunities.

Funding to begin this project was made possible by RTP grants, Friends of Makoshika and Makoshika State Park. The Friends of Makoshika helped with the initial process of designing and engineering the recreational trail. The continued partnership between the Friends of Makoshika and Makoshika State Park will help secure additional grants and donations to complete the trail project.

Appendix A: Site Maps

NE ¼, Sec 2, T15N, R55E, and W ½, Sec 1, T15N, R55E of Dawson County, Montana





Appendix B: Visitor Preference Assessment Reference List

**Economic Impact Survey of Visitors to Montana's State Parks and Fishing Access Sites.
Nov 2002. Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana – Missoula**

**Interpretive Services Assessment Survey
1997. Makoshika State Park**

**Custer Country Travel Region Visitor Attraction Survey
May 2003. Custer Country Tourism, Billings MT**

**Non-Resident Summer Travel Survey
1996. Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research. University of Montana – Missoula**

**Park Visitor Survey
Dec 2003. Makoshika State Park**

November 22, 2013

To:

Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1420 East Sixth Ave, PO BOX 200701, Helena, MT 59620
FWP-Design & Construction— Paul Valle
FWP-D&C Civil Engineer- Kelly Williams
FWP-Director's Office — Colleen Furthmyre
FWP Lands Section— Candace Durran
FWP Parks Division— Deb McRae
FWP-Fisheries Division— Jackie Windon
FWP-Wildlife Division—Laura Geary
FWP Legal Unit—Kaedy Horne
FWP Lands Section Supervisor—Hugh Zackheim
FWP Commissioner - Matt Tourtlotte
FWP Regional/Area Office Managers
FWP Regional Supervisors
DEQ—Bonnie Lovelace
Montana Audubon Council—Janet Ellis
Montana Environmental Information Center—Adam McLane
Montana State Library
Montana Wildlife Federation—Craig Sharpe
Montana Historical Society—Brian Shovers
Legislative Services
Montana Environmental Quality Council (Leg Services)—Todd Everts
Governor's Office-Tim Baker
MT Historical Preservation Office—Stan Wilmoth
DNRC, State Director—John Tubbs
Dawson County Commissioners, Dawson County Courthouse, Glendive, MT 59330
Glendive Chamber of Commerce
Dawson County Economic Council
City of Glendive
Friends of Makoshika

Ladies and Gentleman,

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the Makoshika Capital Improvement project proposed herein and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until February 14, 2014. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Nathan Powell, Park Manager, at (406) 377-6256. All comments may be sent to the undersigned.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Nathan Powell
Makoshika Park Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

TOURISM REPORT

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager
Montana Office of Tourism-Department of Commerce
301 S. Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

Project Name: Makoshika State Park Proposed Paramount Trail

Project Description: Makoshika State Park intends to construct a 1.18 mile trail. The Paramount Trail connects the city trail at the visitor center to the Cains Coulee Campground.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

Signature Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager Date December 9, 2013