

Draft Environmental Assessment

May 2014

Wayfarers State Park Improvements Project



Draft Environmental Assessment MEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Proposed state action:

Montana State Parks (MTSP), a division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, is proposing to complete facility improvements at Wayfarers State Park. The improvements will take place in several phases as funding allows. Phase 1 is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2014. The proposed improvements for phase 1 consist of: 1) construction of an administrative ranger station/visitor info center in the Harry Horn Day Use Area 2) removal of the outdated and deteriorating restroom and development of a park host site in its place 3) installation of a new public restroom in the Harry Horn Day Use Area and 4) enlarge the existing maintenance/storage building.

Phase 2, to be completed in future years, consists of construction of a new picnic shelter in the day use area near the lake. In order to provide adequate parking for the new group use shelter, the upper day use parking area will be expanded to accommodate an additional 8 -10 vehicles.

2. Agency authority for the proposed action:

MSP has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per 23-2-101 MCA. [The Department also has jurisdiction, custody and control of all Montana state parks.](#) See 23-1-102(4) MCA.

Furthermore, state statute 23-1-110 MCA and ARM 12.6.601-606 guide public involvement and comment for the improvements at state parks and fishing access sites, which this document provides.

3. Name of project: Wayfarers State Park Improvement Project

4. Project sponsor:

Montana State Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-752-5501

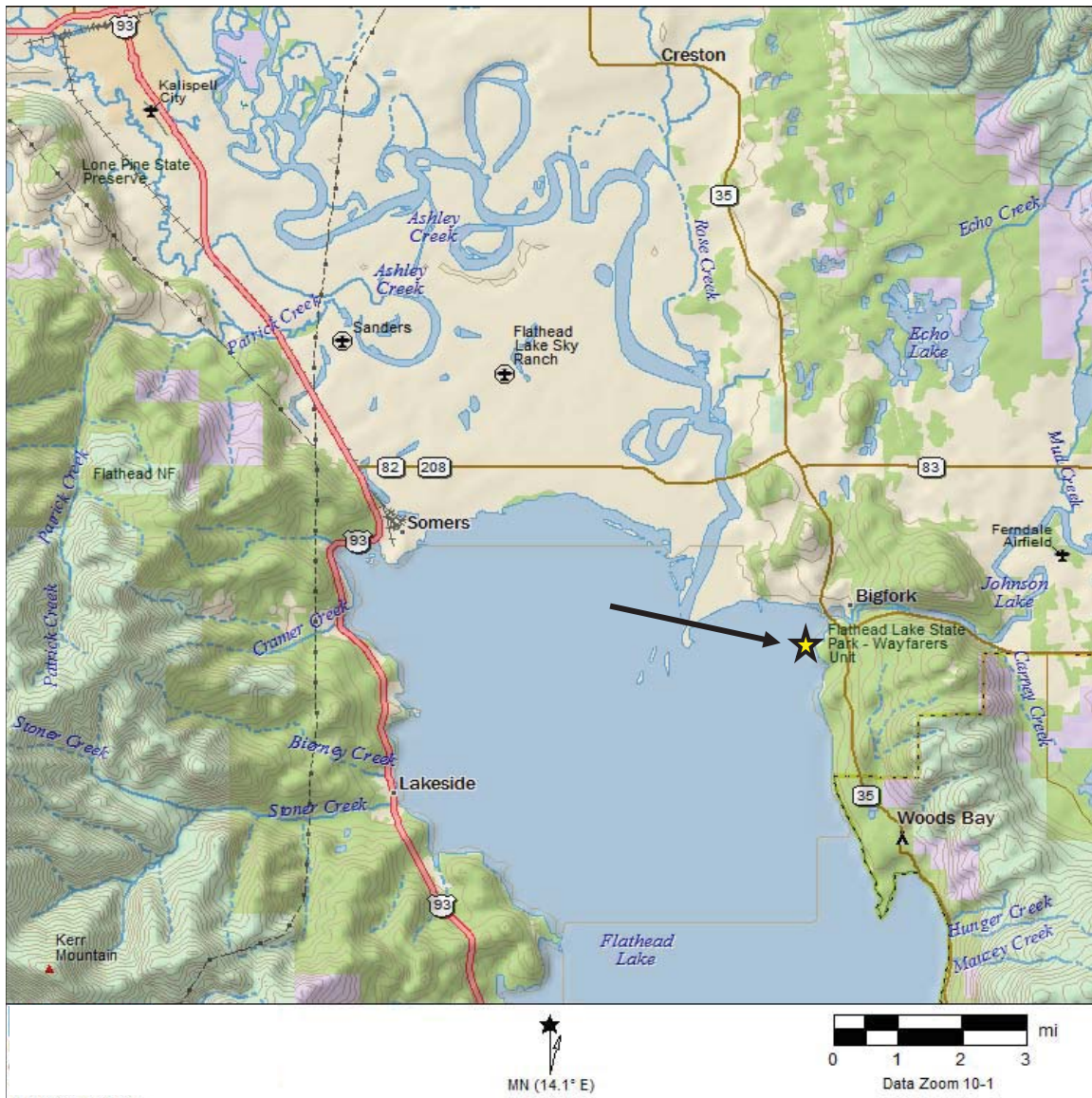
5. Approximate timetable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 2014
Estimated Completion Date: Spring 2015
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 25%

6. Location affected by proposed action:

The project is located at Wayfarers State Park, approximately ¼ mile south of Bigfork, Montana along Hwy 35, in Flathead County. The project is more specifically located in Section 36, Township 27 North, Range 20 West.

Wayfarer State Park Location Map



7.

Project size:

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>0</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
(b) Open Space/ Woodlands/Recreation	<u>0</u> <u>10</u>	Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
		Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	<u>0</u>	Forestry	<u>0</u>
		Rangeland	<u>0</u>
		Other Areas	<u>0</u>

8. Listing of any other local, state or federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction:

(a) Permits: Permits will be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

State Electrical Permit secured by contractor.
Flathead County Sanitarian for installation of new toilet.

(b) Funding:

Bed Tax	\$99,000
Parks Earned Revenue	10,000
Motorboat Fuel Tax	75,000
Parks Road Funds	30,000
Fed. MBDJ	130,000
Total	\$344,000

(c) Other overlapping or additional jurisdictional responsibilities:

Montana State Historical Preservation Office - Archeological & Cultural Site Protection

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action:

Wayfarers State Park is located in Flathead County ¼ mile south of Bigfork, Montana, on Flathead Lake. The park is one of 5 state parks providing public access to the lake and one of 3 state parks on the east side of the lake. The park provides boating, fishing, and camping opportunities and boasts over a 100,000 visits annually. The lake itself affords some of the best lake trout fishing and water-based recreational opportunities in the western United States. MTSP expects the proposed improvements to result in higher quality visitor services for campers and day visitors.

The Flathead Valley is a destination area for millions of visitors annually. The many local attractions include Flathead Lake itself with numerous recreational opportunities, Glacier National Park, Whitefish Mountain, and many small towns and communities that hold a variety of events such as art and craft fairs, outdoor concerts, classic auto and boat shows, and farmers markets, among others. A good portion of the local economy is dependent upon tourism through the summer months. By attracting tourists through better park amenities and services, local businesses will be among the beneficiaries of the park improvements.

The overall proposal consists of several components (figure 1). In phase 1, a ranger station/visitor info center encompassing approximately 900 square feet, will be constructed in the Harry Horn Day Use Area. Two alternative locations will be discussed in the Alternatives section of this document. The building will provide a location for staff, storage and a visitor welcome/information area. The structure will serve as the office for the park manager and park ranger for the Flathead Lake District, who currently are stationed out of Kalispell and commute to the park. It will also serve as a point of contact for visitors seeking information about the park and local amenities. The facility will provide more consistent and improved visitor services, more effective supervision of seasonal staff, improve visitor safety and act as a deterrent to vandalism.

As another part of phase 1, the current restroom for the Harry Horn Day Use Area would be removed and a new ADA accessible toilet would be constructed adjacent to the ranger station/visitor info center location. The current restroom is 30+ years old and does not meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Its location is too far from the parking area for convenient access by many visitors and requires them to cross the main park roadway.

Additionally, a new park host site will be constructed on the old restroom location to provide

better overnight park security and improved grounds maintenance. During the peak season (mid-May to mid- Sept.), park hosts live onsite and provide their own RV. However, the park provides a space or pad for their RV with full hookups.

The final component of phase 1 consists of expanding the area of the existing maintenance building next to the host site on the west side of the park. The current building is essentially the size of a 1 car garage (16' x 20'). The proposal is to enlarge it to approximately the size of a standard 2 car garage. That involves adding about 300 sq. ft. to the existing footprint. Enlargement of the building will provide additional storage space for equipment such as riding mowers and golf carts and provide a modest work area.

In phase 2 of the project, a new group picnic shelter will be built in the day use area near the lake shore. The new shelter will provide better utilization of lakeshore recreational opportunities for visitors participating in family re-unions and other large group activities. In conjunction with the new picnic shelter, the current upper day use parking lot will be expanded to accommodate an additional 8-10 vehicles.

Figure 1. Proposed Wayfarers State Park Concept Plan



The preliminary plan for the proposed project will require infrastructure improvements for the new proposed ranger station. These will include trenching and placing of additional electrical conduit from current power sources to a new electrical panel and the installation of water and sewer lines with a lift station depending on the chosen location of the Ranger Station. This plan is designed with all conduits including water, sewer and phone to be placed underground so that the natural environment of the park can be maintained. Ground disturbing activities will be required in order to bury the conduits and to construct the new ranger station and park host site. Some ground covering vegetation including mature trees will be displaced. Efforts will be taken to limit the number of trees requiring removal and to prevent erosion. All disturbed areas will be reseeded with native vegetation.

10. Alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action - MTSP does not make any improvements.

The primary advantage of the No Action Alternative is the cost savings for infrastructure and facility improvements. However, that alternative results in numerous disadvantages. One major disadvantage of Alternative A is that current park operation inefficiencies resulting from the permanent staff's Kalispell office location will continue. These include inefficiencies of daily supervision of seasonal staff, decision making and prioritization of tasks. Due to regular annual turn-over, seasonal staff often does not have the background or experience in park operations to make the necessary daily decisions regarding camping reservations, prioritization of tasks for maintenance, or for appropriately resolving conflicts.

At present, the park manager, park ranger and maintenance personnel are stationed out of the FWP office in Kalispell. This often results in a lack of consistent management presence onsite. Seasonal park hosts currently handle day to day operations, but may not see a supervisor on a daily basis. This can result in delay of some important decisions or staff may not have adequate information, experience or decision making authority. Visitors may not get adequate answers nor will some actions be taken in a timely manner. These delays often lead to frustration for visitors and seasonal staff alike.

Currently, there are only 2 park host sites at Wayfarers which are staffed from early May to Mid-Sept. A maximum of 2 seasonal staff work at any one time during the week, often it's only 1 person. This results in marginal staff presence in the peak season and leaves the larger percentage of the year without any onsite presence at all. Visitors during non peak times of the year will find delays in obtaining information. Additionally, lack of onsite presence results in diminished security at a park which receives considerable visitation in the off season.



Another disadvantage is traffic issues resulting from visitors with RVs driving through the park in search of information. Currently visitors entering the park seeking information must travel ½ mi. to the west side of Wayfarers to contact seasonal staff who may or may not be available at the host site. This results in extra traffic and parking issues as visitors wait for staff to return to find out whether campsites are available or for other park or local amenity information. A ranger station/visitor info center staffed throughout the day will provide visitors with access to information and not require driving to the

west side of the park. This is an important consideration for visitors with large motor homes or those pulling trailers. On the other hand, there is ample parking in the Harry Horn Day

Use Area for larger vehicles or those with trailers.

An additional negative to no action is that the current restroom at the Harry Horn Day Use area will not be replaced. This facility was built prior to the ADA and does not meet the standards for disabled access. The slope leading to the building is too steep and internal building clearances are limited. Furthermore, the structure itself is deteriorating and the siding and interior are in need of a makeover. Additionally, the plumbing and electrical wiring do not meet current code and are a continual maintenance repair item as the structure ages.

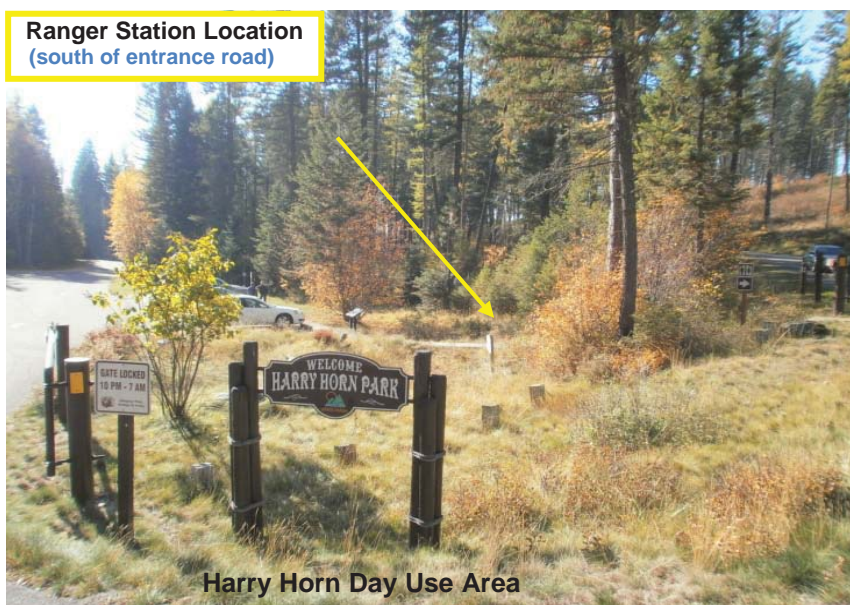
The picnic shelter at Harry Horn was built in 1996. The shelter is available for public rental, but typically there are only 4-6 rentals per year. This is due in large part to the greater demand for group activities near the water. Lack of a lakeside group use facility results in many groups going elsewhere. Also, often groups that rent the shelter end up at the lake competing for limited single picnic table sites. A number of conflicts and arguments have resulted from this situation in recent summers. A no action decision will continue this trend.

Lack of an adequate work shop in many instances has hampered efforts to make timely repairs. The main shop is in Kalispell so often even minor repairs may result in extended down time. The existing maintenance building is used to also store equipment and materials resulting in very little room to provide space for necessary power tools and equipment such as a table saw, drill press, welder or work bench space. The no action alternative will result in continued almost total dependence on using the main shop in Kalispell.

Alternative B: MSP proceeds with all improvements as proposed locating the Ranger Station to the south side of the entrance road in the Harry Horn Day Use Area.

The proposed enhancements at Wayfarers State Park provide many advantages. It will increase management presence and result in higher quality experiences for visitors through more timely decision making, better operational effectiveness from trained and experienced permanent staff and increased accessibility to park personnel by visitors.

The proposed ranger station will eliminate time lost and the cost of travel to and from Kalispell. With managers and rangers reporting to Wayfarers as their duty station, management staff will be available to the public and able to respond to inquiries from the local community, travelers and other users throughout the course of the year.



Ranger Station Location
(south of entrance road)

Harry Horn Day Use Area

The ranger station facility (appendix A) will house offices for the park manager and park ranger and include a small visitor information area. This will be staffed approximately 6- 8 hours per day and seven days a week during the peak season (5/15-9/15) and 5 days a week in the off season. An added benefit is that a permanent office/visitor center will increase the potential for seasonal

hiring from the local community by providing an adequate work area during inclement weather. Additionally, there would now be a formal office for conducting business instead of the seasonal staff using their own RV for such purposes. There will still be park hosts who will remain onsite overnight, but these positions may now be supplemented with recruitment from the surrounding communities, thus increasing overall staff levels. The facility will offer visitors quicker access to information and not require them to drive fully into the park and seek out park staff as is currently the case. The proposed location would result in the removal of a piece of playground equipment at that location. However, this equipment will be re-installed just to the south of the existing multi-element play structure. Playground equipment will remain in acknowledgement of the agreement between the MTSP and the Horn Family.

The removal of the outdated Harry Horn Day Use Area restroom and replacement with a new restroom adjacent to the ranger station will provide better service and greater convenience to visitors. This facility will be an ADA compliant accessible flush toilet attached to the ranger station. It will be independently accessible, so that it will remain available to the public without them having to go into the ranger station.

The site of the old restroom will be converted to a host site at minimal cost. Utilities are already available at the site and site preparation will only require a gravel surface over the existing flat bench area. Access to the site will require widening of the old service road by 4-6 feet.



This access road comes off the main entrance road approximately 150 feet from Hwy 35. The new host site will provide for better overall park security as currently overnight onsite staff is located adjacent to the campground on the west side of the park and there is no presence in the Harry Horn Day Use Area. This site would provide a security presence near the park entrance which can reduce late night disturbances and vandalism.



In phase 2, a new group picnic shelter will be constructed in the day use area near the lake shore and just to the east of the existing restroom facility. The new shelter will be similar in design to the Harry Horn area shelter with dimensions approximately 20' x 30' and serve groups up to 50 persons. This will meet demand for lake access by larger groups and provide for additional park revenues. It is anticipated this facility will be rented far more often than the current shelter.

To facilitate increased traffic and parking needs, the upper day use parking area will be modified to the north to provide space for an extra 4-6 vehicles. Additionally, the area

adjacent to the Kiosk will be modified to provide an additional 3-4 spaces resulting in a net gain of 8-10 passenger vehicle parking spaces.

The project as proposed will result in better access by visitors to park staff, meet the demands for improved amenities and provide for quicker more effective response to issues regarding safety, information and facility conditions.

The disadvantage of alternative B is the expense of funding infrastructure and facility improvements. A lift station would be required to pump effluents across the road to the existing sewer line. With a lift pump station a flush toilet is possible. However a flush facility may be more expensive to construct than a vault style. Additionally, there will be heating costs associated with keeping the facility open year round.

Alternative C: MSP proceeds with improvements as proposed locating the Ranger Station to the north side of the entrance road in the Harry Horn Day Use Area.

This alternative discusses another potential ranger station location to the north of the entrance road. Other improvements previously discussed in alternative B would also occur if this alternative was selected.

The advantage of alternative C is reduced costs for utility installation to the Ranger Station/Info Center. This location would not require a lift station to pump effluent to the north side of the entrance road and would connect with the existing sewer and water lines at this location. All other utility lines would be shortened in length as connections to water, sewer and electric are in close proximity to the proposed site. No boring under the roadway would be necessary.



However, there are several major disadvantages of alternative C. First, its location creates a potential vehicle and pedestrian safety issue. This site is adjacent to the main roadway where there is considerable traffic flow during the summer months. In the peak summer season, there would be inadequate parking for larger RVs in front of the ranger station (appendix

C) requiring visitors to park in the existing Harry Horn parking lot. Visitors with motor homes or those pulling trailers would need to pull into the main Harry Horn parking lot. This will require them to walk across the main roadway to access the facility. During July and August there is considerable incoming and outgoing vehicle traffic which will present safety concerns. Vehicles that park in front of the ranger station would also conflict with any vehicle lines that occur at the entrance station during busy times, especially on weekends. When lines exist, those exiting the park would either have to wait till traffic clears or turn in

to the main lot on the south side. This would place them in the same situation as those with large RVs.

Secondly, since there will be no lift station on the south side of the entrance road, a new restroom located adjacent to the ranger station would make for a longer walk for many visitors and necessitate crossing the main roadway. If this location is judged not to provide adequate service to the public, then the only alternative is to install a vault style toilet on the south side of the road (not part of the current proposal). This would require periodic pumping with associated costs. Also, vault style toilets under certain circumstances can be odorous.

Finally, this location's closer proximity to adjacent residences would create a reduced buffer zone for adjacent property owners. At this location day to day business would be conducted year round with resulting traffic and encroachment on the privacy of adjacent property owners.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
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				1d
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

- 1b. The construction of the new ranger station and group picnic shelter and expansion of the storage facility will disturb ground covering and related soils. Trees will need to be removed for the spatial needs of the structures. Tree and other vegetation removal will be minimized and only those that would interfere with the design plan where no other option is available will be cut or cleared. The new host site should not result in removal of any large trees as the site is already sufficiently cleared.

Any new electric and water lines will be trenched to an anticipated width of 12" and depth of 24". This will provide enough width and depth for the conduits and required fill materials. With the completion of the installation of the conduits and lines, the disturbed areas will be reclaimed and reseeded with native vegetation to decrease the potential for erosion.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 c.)			X			2a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X			2b
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 regs? (Also see 2a.)		N/A				
f. Other:		X				

1d. Paving for additional parking will require road surface preparation. This will consist of the addition of road base materials to bring the surface to the grade as specified in the design plan. There is little risk of sediment washing into water sources due to the distance from the lake and lack of continuous or intermittent streams in the immediate area. Erosion control barriers will be used if necessary to prevent sediment loss prior to paving.

2 a/b. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by heavy equipment during clearing, paving, and site preparation. The trenching for the conduit and placement of new electrical, water and sewer lines, and the clearing and site preparation for the building facilities, would also create minor dust and vehicle emissions. After the project's completion, the amount of dust and emissions will return to normal levels.

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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	3b
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				

3b. The proposed project is not expected to detrimentally alter any surface drainage patterns. Culverts will be placed to ensure proper drainage at the office site where fill is necessary to obtain the correct slope grade. All disturbed areas will be reseeded with native vegetation to decrease the potential chance of different drainage patterns becoming established in the vicinity of the covered trenches.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		yes	4e
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		N/A				
g. Other:		X				

- 4a. Some trees and shrubs will be removed in the location of the proposed ranger station, new group picnic shelter and expansion of the storage building as identified in the final site design specifications. Corresponding forest floor vegetation will be lost in the vicinity of the structure footprints and where parking is expanded. Other vegetation may be adversely impacted by the trenching for the electrical conduit and new water & sewers lines and require the removal of those individual plants. Efforts will be taken to limit impacts by routing lines so as not to make removal of mature trees necessary. Because of the planned underground design of the conduits, surface vegetation will be displaced. Reseeding/replanting the disturbed areas with native species will mitigate these influences to the overall plant community.
- 4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage database revealed no occurrences of plant life that is designated a species of concern, threatened, or endangered within the park.
- 4e. The proposed ranger station, host site, expanded parking and group shelter construction and installation of underground utility components will increase the potential of noxious weeds becoming established in disturbed areas. Mitigating actions will include reseeding with native species and monitoring of growth of noxious weeds at disturbed areas. Any noxious weeds discovered will be eradicated using Integrated Weed Management (IWM) methods identified in the Region 1 Noxious Weed and Exotic Vegetation Management Plan. This typically involves chemical and mechanical control efforts.

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				5b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				5c
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				5f
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, or other human activity)?		X				
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				

5b/c. Since construction is limited in scope to a few select sites, the impact to game and nongame species is not considered significant. Little forage and cover will be affected. The impacted areas are primarily travel zones for larger animals such as deer. During the construction activities, some species activities may be temporarily affected. Some smaller nongame species may be affected by the removal of trees for the ranger station, group shelter and parking improvements. Overall, the impact to wildlife habitat will be minimal. Big game species are not likely to be affected in any way other than a temporary avoidance of the area during construction. Nongame species including small mammals and birds may be displaced to adjacent areas until the project is completed and reseeded areas have returned to preconstruction condition.

5f. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage database revealed no occurrences of species that are designated a species of concern, threatened, or endangered within the park.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		yes	6a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		yes	6b
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:		X				

6a/b. There would be a temporary increase in noise levels due to construction equipment operation during the course of the project. Most of the work will take place in the fall and spring off-season period when visitation is low. This will limit the inconvenience to park visitors. The Harry Horn parking area may be closed temporarily during the week over the course of the project, but will be open on weekends. Except for short term road closures to move equipment, all other areas of the park will remain open.

Residences adjacent to the park may occasionally experience some intermittent ambient noise from the demolition of the old restroom and construction of the ranger station in the Harry Horn day use area. However, this will be temporary in nature with heavy equipment usage lasting only a few days. Construction and use of equipment will take place during normal business hours. There would be no additional disturbance to home owners during the parking lot expansion and group shelter construction on the west side of the park.

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

7a. The proposed enhancements to the park will not change the existing use of the area, but will provide for increased visitor services and improved maintenance of existing grounds and facilities.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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				
d. For <u>P-R/D-J</u> , will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			X			8d
e. Other:		X				

8d. Chemical spraying may be used to control the establishment and growth of noxious weeds in the proposed construction areas. Weed treatment will follow the guidelines of the Region 1 Weed Management Plan.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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				
f. Other:			X			

9f. There will be a positive impact to the local community from the proposed improvements from the standpoint of visitor services. The park is utilized year round with the majority of day use coming from local valley residents. The administrative site will allow more direct contact of parks personnel with the public and especially local residents who frequent the park often. It is anticipated the ranger station will be staffed 6-7 days per week 6-8 hours per day during the peak season and 5 days per week the remaining time. This is in contrast to the current situation where the park is staffed only during the peak season from approximately mid- May to mid-Sept. and staff availability is limited. Visitors who require a quick response or need timely information will be able to obtain it more expeditiously. More frequent staff presence will increase maintenance standards as well since staff will spend more hours on the park and be better able to respond to maintenance issues. The new restroom in Harry Horn will provide a more convenient location and be able to accommodate disabled users and be open year round. The new group picnic shelter by the lake will be available to meet the demand by large groups for a more water oriented setting.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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			10c
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d
e. Define projected revenue sources			X			10e
f. Define projected maintenance costs.			X			10f
g. Other:			X			

10c. The proposed action will require the establishment of new underground electrical conduit lines between existing or new electrical panels in order to provide electricity to the ranger station and visitor information center. New water, sewer and phone lines will also need to be established to accommodate utility requirements for the proposed administrative site. Propane will likely be the primary heating source and will require installation of new gas lines from the tank to the interior of the building.

10d. The proposed installation of utilities for the ranger station and maintenance shop is expected to have a minor impact on the park's consumption of electricity and propane gas. Additional costs will be incurred for electrical use and propane gas heating.

10e. If Alternative B or C was completed, the park could expect some moderate increase in revenue. Sales of annual park passes will be increase due to availability year round. Other retail items such as T-shirts, hats, DVDs, books etc. may be sold in the visitor contact area of the ranger station and provide some additional revenue. Rental of the new group picnic shelter is expected to increase providing additional revenue.

10f. Increases to current maintenance costs are expected by the proposed improvements. Utility costs will be incurred with the construction of the ranger station/visitor info center. Facility repairs will be necessary from time to time. The additional utility costs for the office is estimated to run from \$300-400 per month. This includes electric, water, sewer, propane and phone/DSL costs.

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		yes	11a.
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? (See attached Tourism Report.)			X			11c
d. For <u>P-R/D-J</u> , will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		N/A				
e. Other:		X				

11a. The design for the facility improvement project requires all utility lines to be placed underground. The ranger station structure will be visible as the user drives off the highway, but the design and materials used in construction will be such as to fit in with the park setting. The footprint of the building will be less than 900 square ft.

The design of the new Harry Horn area restroom will be similar to that in found in other parks around Flathead Lake if it is a vault style. Typically these are constructed of tinted concrete with simulated wood panel siding and a gable roof. A flush facility design will attempt to integrate with the ranger station structure with similar siding and color.

The new group shelter will be similar in design to the current one in the Harry Horn Day Use area, but likely smaller dimensionally, approximately 20' by 30' versus 25' x 50'.

Expansion of the storage facility will be to the uphill side of the existing structure and match the current design thereby reducing the overall visual impact.

The upper parking lot will be expanded by approximately 8-10 passenger vehicle spaces to accommodate vehicles from use of the new group shelter. Since this is an add on to the existing parking area it is not expected to affect scenic quality of the day use area.

11c. There will be minor impacts on tourism opportunities at the site. See *Appendix D* for the Tourism Report. The project as proposed will provide increased visitor service through improved onsite contacts of park staff with users on a year round basis. Visitors will have better access to full-time qualified staff that can provide more effective and efficient service due to their training, experience, higher skill sets and availability. During construction, the Harry Horn Day Use Area may need to be closed to visitors for a limited amount of time. This may affect any type of day use in that area of the park. When required, MTSP will work with the contractor to schedule this project so that park visitors are minimally inconvenienced. Most work should occur during the late summer, fall, and spring, when visitation is lowest. Once the project is completed, the effects on the quality of the recreational opportunities will be positive. The availability of staff will increase service. Onsite permanent staff will result in higher maintenance standards and expedited repairs of facilities. The ability to access other parks in a timelier manner along the east side of Flathead Lake will provide repairs and better service at those parks as well.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
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 <u>P-R/D-J</u> , will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		N/A				
e. Other:		X				

12a-e. No impacts to cultural or historical resources are anticipated. All locations affected by the project's actions have had previous disturbance and there is no indication of any cultural or historical site.

However, in accordance with the Montana Antiquities Act (22-3-421 to 22-3-442) and with FWP's ARM rules (12.8.501 to 12.8.10), a heritage resource survey will be conducted prior to project development to identify possible historic and archaeological sites. Impacts to these sites, if identified, will be taken into consideration as part of project planning and will be avoided, if possible. If sites are identified and cannot be avoided in accordance with MCA 22-3-430, mitigation measures will be proposed.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that 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				13e
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.		N/A				

13e. The project may create some local public controversy depending on the alternative chosen. Adjacent property owners on the north boundary may have concerns over the proximity of facilities to their property, especially in Alternative C. Measures can be taken to mitigate impacts by maintaining substantial vegetative buffers between facilities and the park boundary thereby significantly reducing visual and noise issues.

Improvements to the park will further the Parks Division's goals to provide quality visitor services and higher maintenance standards for residents and non-residents by improving amenities and by providing an onsite management presence that will protect human health, natural resources, and enhance recreational opportunities. The project will not create any cumulatively negative impacts that might affect the use of the park by visitors.

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

Final plans and specifications for the project will be developed by the state-appointed engineering consultant in conjunction with MTSP engineering staff. MTSP engineers will design other portions of the project. All state and federal permits will be obtained by MTSP. Construction will be completed by a private contractor selected through the state's competitive bid process. Final inspection will be the responsibility of the MTSP Design and Construction Bureau.

State pesticide use laws and regulations will be followed. Application records will be submitted to the Montana Department of Agriculture as required every five years, and these records will be available to state investigators upon request.

If the cultural resource inventory identifies any previously unknown historical/cultural sites in the path of the underground conduits, MTSP will work with SHPO and its cultural resource specialists to discuss alternatives to the design of the conduit system to ensure culturally and historically sensitive areas are not disturbed.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The proposed facility improvements at Wayfarers State Park will meet the increasing need for higher quality visitor services and ensure maintenance standards are met. It will also help meet the Parks Division mandate to provide quality recreational opportunities.

Currently, there is onsite seasonal staff at the park only from mid-May to mid- September. The onsite staff typically does not have a background in recreation or park management and often do not return for additional seasons. Therefore the frontline personnel that the visitor is most likely to currently encounter are generally the least experienced and trained. This often leads to conflicts in implementing policies or rules and sometimes in dispensing of correct information. Misinterpretation of policies or lack of complete understanding of procedures in the past has led to misunderstandings with visitors and other staff. The seasonal staff is very valuable to the functioning of the park's daily operations, but they may lack the necessary background and/or authority to make good or timely decisions. They also do not typically have the skill set to determine priorities for park operations or in other words they seldom see the big picture in how various factors of operations relate within a park or from park to park. The lack of adequately trained onsite staff leads to a diminishing of the quality of services provided to the public and delays decision making and the setting of maintenance priorities.

Wayfarers State park is the most visited park in Region 1 with over 100,000 visits annually. The amount of visitation in the peak season makes it difficult for many seasonal staff to perform their duties due to simultaneous issues that arise. Most eventually are overwhelmed with the number of visitor contacts and problems that arise for which they are not trained to respond. The past few seasons has seen regular turnover of staff or personnel conflicts due to high stress and burnout. The presence of a full time park manager and ranger will reduce the work load on seasonal personnel, and provide better service to visitors through qualified management decisions and prioritization and completion of tasks. The park ranger station/visitor info center provides a convenient location where normal business can be conducted and where administrative services are readily available to the public. Onsite park offices and park ranger stations are presently located at many other state parks in Montana such as Lewis & Clark Caverns, Makoshika, Tongue River Reservoir, Bannack, Hell Creek and Lone Pine State Parks. When a park reaches a level of maturity in regards to operations due to high visitation and maintenance, an onsite management presence is necessary to provide the quality of service that most visitors expect.

Regarding other individual components of the project, the current location of the picnic shelter in the Harry Horn Day Use Area has proven to be less desirable as a group facility and large groups will be better served with another shelter facility nearer the water. The removal of the old restroom and conversion of the site to an additional host pad would allow one of the host sites in the campground to revert back to a campsite. The host site between site 3 and 4 was originally a campsite, but was converted to a host site years ago. This would add a camp site for general public use. Expansion of the upper day use parking lot will provide the necessary room for vehicles that are associated with activities at the new group picnic shelter. Additionally, expansion of the existing storage building will allow for riding mowers and golf carts to be stored at the park rather than in Kalispell and provide a modest area for minor repair work.

Because of the scope of the proposed improvements, it is expected there will be a limited number of impacts to the human and physical environment. However, most of these influences, which were previously noted, are expected to be for only a relatively short duration of the construction period

with no lasting negative effects on the local environment. For those actions requiring minor mitigation, such as the trenching for electric, water and sewer lines and construction of the new ranger station and host pad, measures will be taken to landscape and reseed disturbed areas. The reseeding of the affected areas will decrease the chance of noxious weeds being established and will limit erosion. Additionally, MTSP's cultural survey of the project will ensure previously known or newly identified historical/cultural areas are not affected by any ground disturbance.

A negative result of the project will be utility and upkeep costs over time. However, due to the increasing popularity of Wayfarers and all Flathead Lake parks, an onsite management presence will provide better service to visitors, protection of park resources and more efficient operations and effectiveness of staff efforts. These factors are felt to outweigh the added costs of the upkeep and save money in the long run through reduced travel, down time of facilities and better service to the parks customers. The project improvements are expected to promote a higher quality park experience by improving visitor satisfaction with the park's facilities and daily operations. This in turn ensures visitors a faster response to their needs, promotes a better relationship with the local community and provides increased revenue generation.

With the recent highly successful state parks campsite reservation system, a park ranger station housing a reservation work station will provide more efficient access to data and relieve the task of operating the system from the entrance booth. Presently, the reservation computer system is in the entrance station booth. The equipment takes up half the available space in the building and can result in longer waits for visitors entering the park when reservation information is accessed. Vehicles lines may develop at the entrance when the attendant processes data while simultaneously trying to answer questions and provide information as vehicles enter.

This project also complies with the long-range goals of MTSP to raise state park standards, provide quality and diverse recreational experiences, and meet the Parks program outcome of protection and enhancement of resources.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public involvement:

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action, and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record*, and *Daily Inter Lake*.
- One statewide press release.
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://MSP.mt.gov>.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

If requested within the comment period, the department may arrange a public meeting.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope, having few minor impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

2. Duration of comment period:

The public comment period will extend for 30 days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., June 9, 2014, and can be mailed to the address below:

Wayfarers State Park Improvements Project
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 1 Headquarters
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

Or email comments to: WayfarersComments@mt.gov

Additionally, a public meeting presenting a brief summary of the project followed by a question and answer session is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20 at 7:00 p.m. at the Bethany Lutheran Church meeting room located at 8959 MT Highway 35 in Bigfork.

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

Based on the criteria provided by MEPA Model Rule III to assess if an EIS is required, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts will be created from the proposed action. Therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Persons responsible for preparing the EA:

Jerry Sawyer
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-751-4575
jsawyer@mt.gov

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

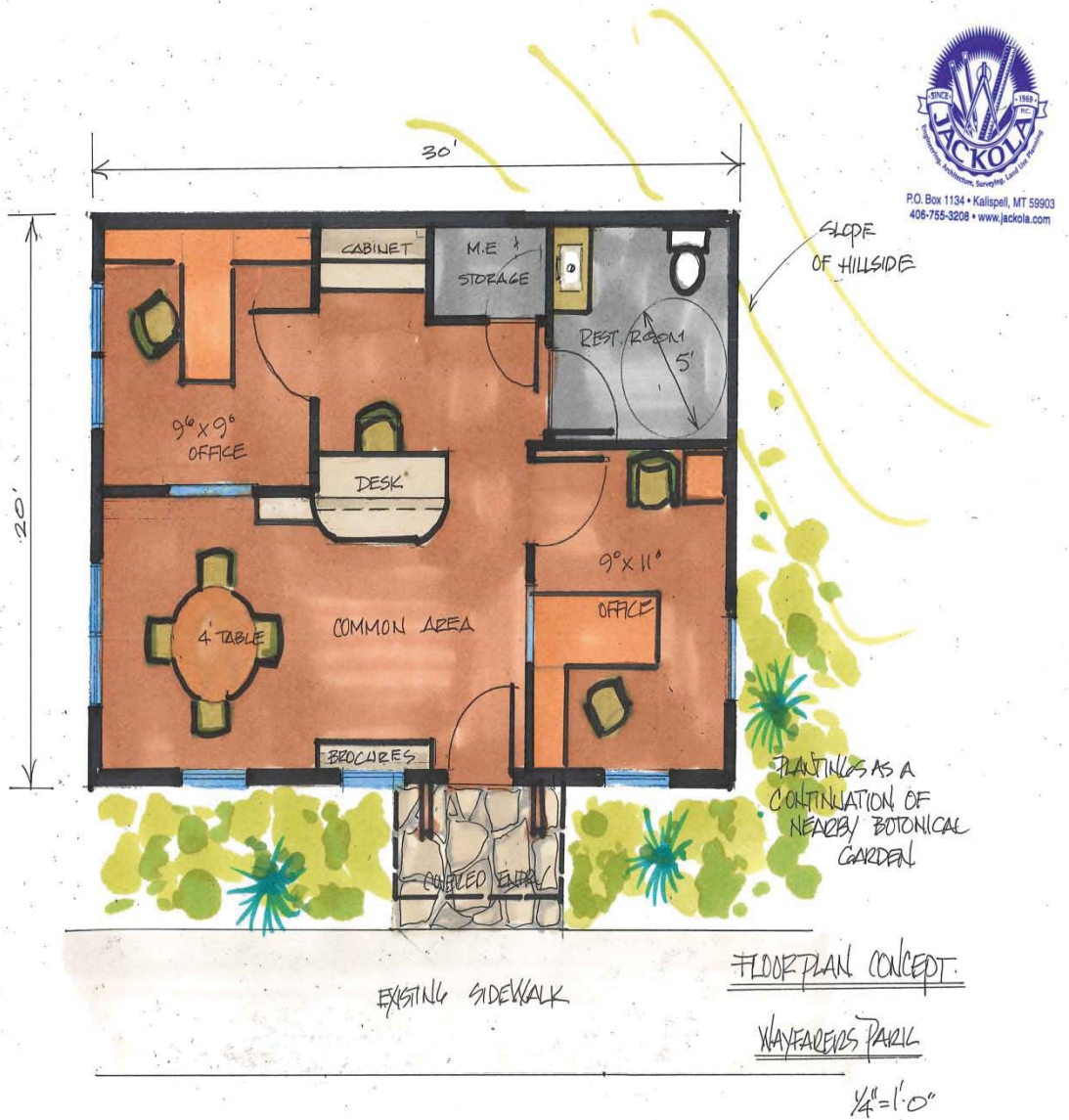
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division
Wildlife Division
Fisheries Division
Design & Construction Bureau
Legal Unit
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

APPENDICES

- A. Ranger Station/Information Center Floor Plan
- B. Alternative B Ranger Station/Visitor Center Location
- C. Alternative C Ranger Station/Visitor Center location
- D. Department of Commerce - Tourism Report
- E. State Historic Preservation Office – Recommendation Letter
- F. Alternative Location Considered But Rejected
- G. 23-1-110 MCA - HB495 Project Qualification Checklist
- H. Horn Family project support letter

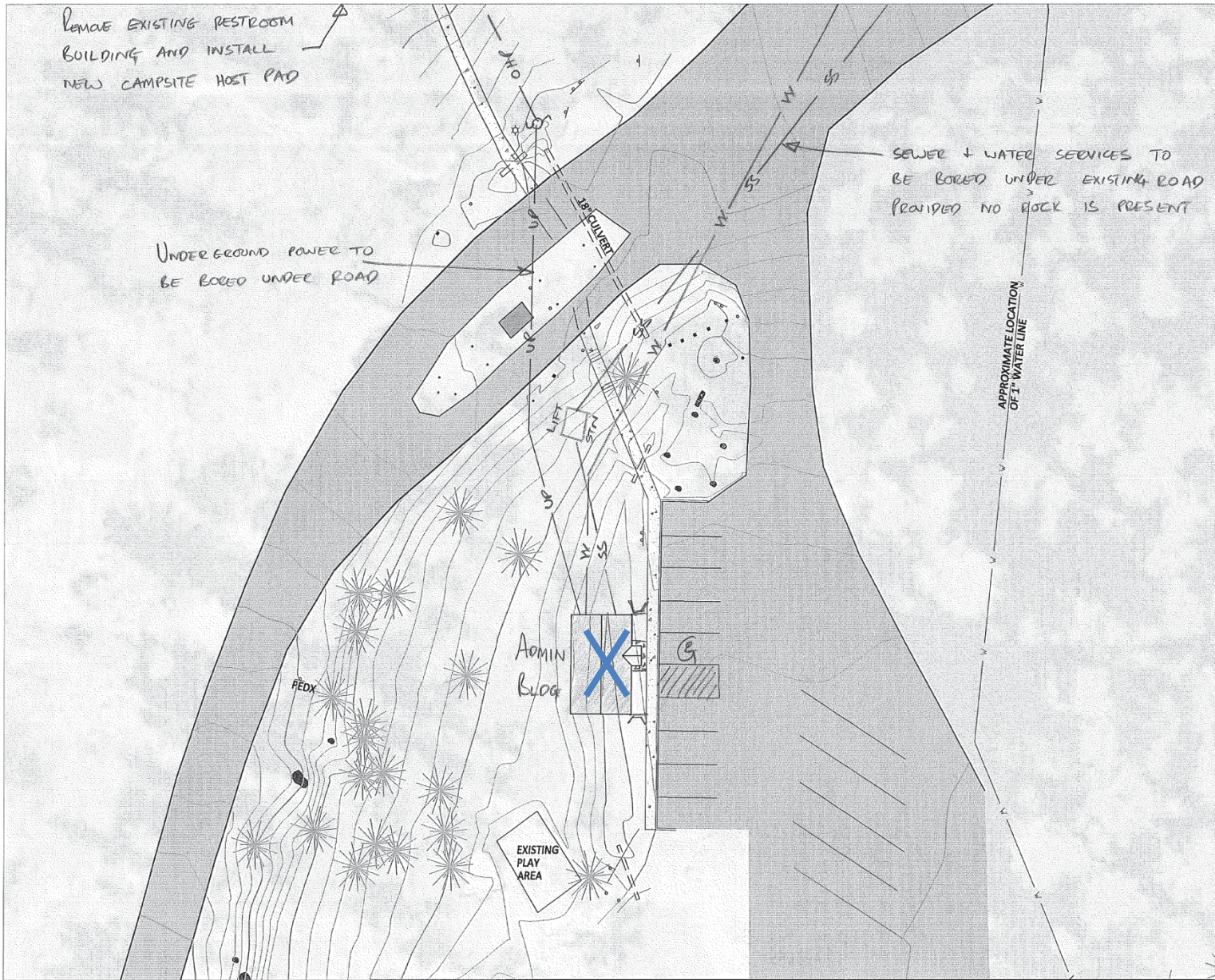
Appendix A

Ranger Station/Visitor Center Floor Plan



Appendix B

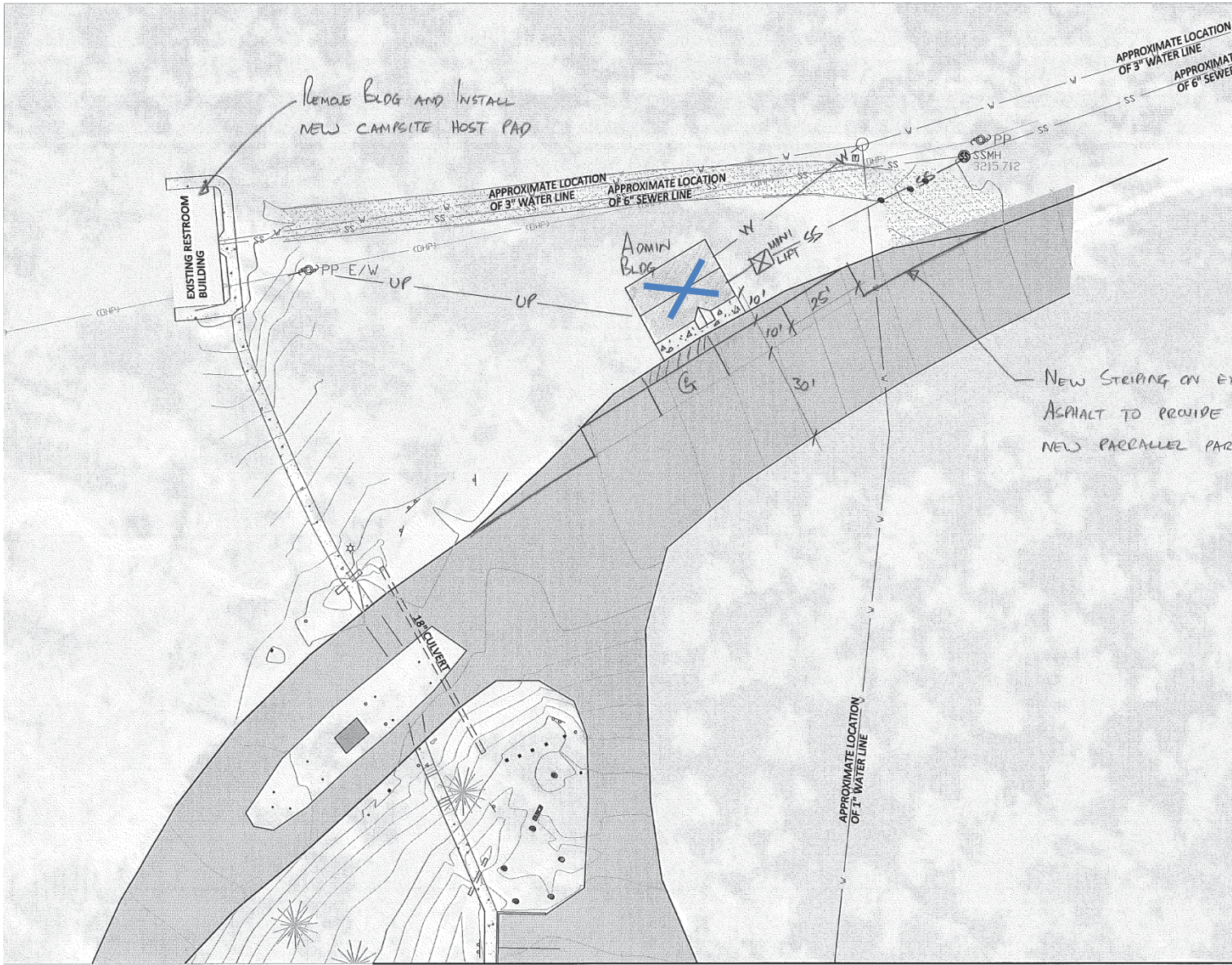
Alternative B Ranger Station



CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN (SO

Appendix C

Alternative C Ranger Station



CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN (NO

Appendix D

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: Wayfarers State Park Improvements Project

Project Description: The project consists of several components (figure 1). In phase 1, a Ranger Station encompassing approximately 900 square feet, will be constructed in the Harry Horn Day Use Area to the south of the entrance station. The building will provide two offices, closet storage and a small visitor welcome/information area. The Ranger Station will serve as the office for the park manager and park ranger for the Flathead Lake District, who currently are stationed out of Kalispell and commute to the park. The facility will provide more consistent and improved visitor services, more effective supervision of seasonal staff, improve visitor safety and act as a deterrent to vandalism.

As another part of Phase 1, the current restroom for the Harry Horn Day Use Area would be demolished and a new handicap accessible latrine would be constructed on the south side of the entrance road near the parking area. The current restroom is 30+ years old and does not meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Additionally, its location is too far from the parking area for convenient access by many visitors and requires visitors to cross the main park roadway.

Additionally, a new park host site will be constructed on the old restroom location to provide better overnight park security and improved grounds maintenance. During the peak season (mid-May to mid- Sept.), volunteer park hosts will live onsite.

In Phase 2 of the project, a new group picnic shelter will be built in the day use area near the lake shore. The new shelter will provide better utilization of lakeshore recreational opportunities for visitors participating in family re-unions and other large group activities. In conjunction with the new picnic shelter, the current upper day use parking lot will be expanded to accommodate an additional 8-10 vehicle.

This project complies with the long-range goals of MTSP to raise state park standards, provide quality and diverse recreational experiences, and meet the Parks program outcome of protection and enhancement of resources.

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

Yes, as described, this 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 March 13, 2014

Appendix E

- SHPO letter pending

In accordance with the Montana Antiquities Act (22-3-421 to 22-3-442) and with FWPs ARM rules (12.8.501 to 12.8.10), a heritage resource survey will be conducted prior to project development to identify possible historic and archaeological sites. Impacts to these sites, if identified, will be taken into consideration as part of project planning and will be avoided, if possible. If sites are identified and cannot be avoided in accordance with MCA 22-3-430, mitigation measures will be proposed.

Appendix F

Alternative location for Park Ranger Station, considered, but dismissed.

1. Ranger Station located on west side of Wayfarers SP in the present location of the host site.

This proposal was rejected due the likelihood of creating major traffic congestion during the peak season, especially in July and August. This location is just at the bottom of the hill across from the upper day use parking lot. When the parking lot is full, which occurs regularly during July and August there would be no available space for a visitor to park when going to the ranger station for information. Additionally, the day use lot is for passenger vehicle parking and consequently there would be no available parking for large RVs or vehicles with trailers. Also, its proximity to the waste dump station would further add to the congestion when the dump station was being utilized as that would eliminate any potential turnaround for RVs.



APPENDIX G
23-1-110 MCA
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date: 2/4/2014

Person Reviewing: Jerry Sawyer

Project Location: Wayfarers State Park, approximately 1/4 mile south of Bigfork, Montana in Flathead County, Section 36, Township 27 North, Range 20 West.

Description of Proposed Work: Montana State Parks (MSP), a division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, is proposing to complete facility improvements at Wayfarers State Park. The proposed improvements consist of: 1) construction of an administrative Ranger Station in the Harry Horn day use area 2) demolition of Harry Horn restroom and development of a park host site in its place, 3) installation of a new public toilet in Harry Horn day use area and 4) construction of a new picnic shelter in the day use area near the lake with added parking.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please place an X in box for all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: *Existing service road will be widened by approximately 4 feet.*
- B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: *This project proposal includes construction of a 700-800 sq. ft office/visitor contact center and new group shelter.*
- C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: *Clearing for office facility, parking lot expansion and construction of a new group shelter will require excavation greater than 20 cubic yards.*
- D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: *No.*
- E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: *No.*
- F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: *No.*
- G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry-quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: *No.*
- H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: *No.*
- I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: *No.*
- J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern, including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: *No.*

If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

Appendix H

FROM THE DESK OF
RICHARD HORN

March 30, 2014
Montana Fish and Wildlife and Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, Montana 59901
Attention: Park Ranger Jerry Sawyer

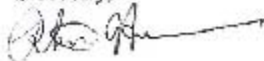
To whom it may concern,

For the past 23 years I was a park ranger for Long Beach Parks and Recreation Department. I understand the park projects can be controversial. It was controversial when the State first developed this park after my father donate it to the state of Montana. I am flexible with your decisions with the changes towards the use of Harry Horn Park , as long as my father's wishes are carried out.

In reference to the project you would like to do, I believe that putting the Ranger Station on the south side of the park would be the safest area for people to come and check-in, get information, and see the Visitor Center. I understand the old restrooms on the north side are not ADA approved, and I recommend that they will meet the ADA requirements and be put next to the ranger station. By putting the restroom next to the Ranger Station it would be more convenience for the visitors to access.

I approve for the north end to be use by the Park's Host to reside in to oversee the park. Since they will be removing the old playground, I would like to see a new playground equipment install and to be put near the picnic area. I am very interested in helping out in any way I can, and be involved with the project.

Sincerely,



Richard Horn

P. O. BOX #21
ANAHEIM, CA 92815