FRENCHTOWN POND STATE PARK

MONTANA STATE PARKS

March 16, 2001

FINAL
MANAGEMENT PLAN
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

FRENCHTOWN POND STATE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN
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MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS FRENCHTOWN POND STATE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

PREFACE

A. Purpose of Management Plans

A management plan serves to establish the overall direction for the provision of visitor services, the management of natural and cultural resources, and development of all associated facilities and programs. It is a working, dynamic document that guides the day to day operation of a park, and serves as the basis for management decisions and actions.

A management plan translates policies into actions necessary to achieve identified goals and objectives, and to further the enhancement and protection of park resources. Management plans normally "sunset" no earlier than five years and no later than 10 years. The Frenchtown Management Plan will serve as a ten-year planning and management document.

B. Legal Authority for the Development of Management Plans for Montana State Parks

Legal authority is provided under the following laws and administrative rules:

1. Montana Code 23, Chapters 1 and 2
2. Administrative Rules of Montana 12.8.101 - 201

C. Components of the Management Plan

The management planning process consists of three phases:

Phase 1 - Introduction, Mission Statement, Ten-year Vision, Management Goals, Benefits of Management Planning, Park History

Phase 2 - Regional Analysis, Park Resources, Operations and Maintenance budgets; Staffing; Inventory of Park Facilities and Resources; and Visitation Summary

Phase 3 - Resources Protection & Visitor Accommodation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Frenchtown Pond State Park management plan addresses the general concerns of growth and development in the Missoula Valley and how Frenchtown Pond State Park should be managed to retain the qualities for which the park has become known. The plan identifies the current management scheme, the character of the park, issues that are now important, issues that will become important, and our recommendations for improvements to the park to attain the goal of providing the Missoula Valley with a unique recreational opportunity.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to adopt a plan to guide the subsequent management of Frenchtown Pond State Park. The Missoula regional office and the Parks Division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks would implement the plan.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mission Statement:

The mission statement describes in broad terms the purpose of Frenchtown Pond State Park and serves to provide a more focused direction for the identification of issues and the development of management goals and objectives.

The Frenchtown Pond State Park mission statement is directly associated with the mission statement of the Parks Division and the Department.

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Mission Statement, as presented the 1993 Department Annual Report:

> "The mission of the Montana State Park system is to preserve, enhance, and interpret a diverse representation of Montana's most outstanding natural, cultural/historic, and recreational resources, for the personal, social, and economic benefit of present and future generations."

The Parks Division Mission Statement, as presented in the 1990 State Park Futures Committee report is as follows:

> "The Montana State Park System, through its individual park units, serves to protect Montana's significant natural and cultural heritage, enhance peoples' well being, provides high quality and accessible recreational opportunities for Montanans and visitors, and through appropriate management, enhances the economy through tourism."

B. The Frenchtown Pond Mission Statement:

> "Frenchtown Pond State Park provides for the protection of the natural resources and through its recreational facilities and interpretive programs/special events, gives visitors the opportunity to recreate in a safe environment."

C. Management Goals

The management goal at Frenchtown Pond is to provide maximum outdoor recreational opportunity and diversity within the capabilities of the resource.

The area will be managed as a state park, herein defined as an area providing a broad selection of outdoor recreation opportunities in a natural setting that may be used by many people.

The following goals are consistent with the long-term direction outlined in the 2020 vision for Montana State Parks, the strategic plan developed for the entire park system (FWP, 1998)

Recreation

- To conserve and protect the natural resources. This will be achieved through educational programming and law enforcement efforts.
- To provide an educational experience for park visitors through interpretive programs and special events. The current interpretive programs and special events will be ongoing. However, new educational programs and special events will be added in the future.
- To provide a full range of day-use recreational opportunities while maintaining the park facilities and visitor services.
- Allow park users to pay some of the service cost through the charging of entrance fees and recreational permits.
- Solicit community support and contributions, and promote a spirit of public involvement. This may be achieved through the establishment of a friends group for the park within 5 years.
- Support legislative appropriation for facility improvements over the next two biennium's. For details, see Future Management Direction section and Master Site Plan.

Fishery

- Manage the lake for warm water fish species such as largemouth bass, pumpkinseed, and bluegill. This will be accomplished through the cooperation and expertise of the fisheries division of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.
- Continue the fishing pole lending program. This "hooked on fishing not on drugs" (HOFNOD) program is a cooperative effort with the Conservation Education Division of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.
- Continue working with the Conservation Education Division and offer fishing clinics at the park.

Law Enforcement

- Maintain adherence to regulations that are in force. Review regulations annually to determine if adjustments need to be considered by the Fish Wildlife and Parks Commission.
- Maintain cooperation with other law enforcement agencies; specifically; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Game Wardens, Missoula County Sheriff deputies and Montana Highway Patrol officers.
- Continue dual supervision of the Conservation Specialist Position with the Enforcement Division. This will involve annual work performance reviews.
- Adhere to the no dog policy. FTPSP is a highly used day-use site. The main recreational activities are swimming and picnicking and due to sanitary reasons, dogs will not be allowed.
- Currently the park hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.. However, to accommodate the early morning angler and the late evening boater the hours may be adjusted to an 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. schedule in the future.

D. Ten-Year Vision

"What do we want Frenchtown Pond State Park to look like in ten years, and how do we get there?" This question is answered in broad terms by the following vision statement.

- Within ten years Frenchtown Pond will provide an expanded range of recreational opportunities. These recreational opportunities will include; volleyball, playground equipment, horseshoes and an additional shelter for group use functions.
- The experiences of park visitors will be improved by focusing on quality visitor services and facilities, and elevated resource protection efforts.
- The park will increase its service to visitors by providing expanded recreational opportunities such as a hiking trail around the pond, open space areas for such activities as softball or volleyball, playground equipment, canoe rentals, and food concessions.
- Upgraded facilities that will provide accessibility for people with disabilities. This will be accomplished by providing disabled accessible comfort stations and a sidewalk network that will provide accessibility to other park facilities such as the picnic shelter and beach.

- We will continue to promote a positive, cooperative and open dialogue with adjacent neighbors and nearby local businesses on such issues as weed control, fire safety training, water rescue training and neighborhood program.
- The park will strive to keep pace with increased visitation and use by continually evaluating daily operations and staff scheduling, making adjustments when required.
- Requests for increased operations and maintenance dollars and additional staffing will be based on public demand and desire, maintenance, public education and enhancement of the park resources and facilities. This should provide a quality visitor experience, while ensuring visitor and employee safety.

The specific details of how we will work toward this vision are outlined in greater detail as the plan addresses various issues identified by the public and FWP staff as areas of concern and the various options to address these issues.

E. Review of Previous Efforts and Research

Ground Water Research

Over the last 5 to 6 years, students participating in the Montana Tech-University of Montana Hydrogeology Field Course have collected groundwater seepage data during the month of July at Frenchtown Pond. Additional data collection also occurred in 1999 and 2000 during late March and early April during a field trip for a seminar in surface water-groundwater interaction. For details please see **(Appendix A)**

Survey to Determine Public Preferences

A public user survey was conducted in 1994 by a FWP Park Management Intern. The purpose of the survey was to obtain visitor information regarding future management and improvements to Frenchtown Pond State Park. For details see **(Appendix B)**.

The Planning Process and Public Involvement

Park users, park neighbors and citizens of Missoula County expressed their preferences for recreational facilities at Frenchtown Pond State Park through public meetings and a survey. The public meetings or open houses were hosted at Frenchtown High School on August 9th and 20st, 1997 and at the Region Two Headquarters August 21st, 1997. Also on August 19th and 22nd, 1998 there were public meetings at Frenchtown Pond State Park.

II. LOCATION, SETTING AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

A. Regional Location

Frenchtown Pond State Park is within south central Montana lying west of the Bitterroot Mountains in the Missoula Valley, north of the Clark Fork River drainage. The site is located in Missoula County, one mile west of the townsite of Frenchtown or twenty miles

west of the city of Missoula. It is situated between Interstate Highway 90 and the frontage road that runs parallel to it.

B. Site Description

The Frenchtown Pond site encompasses a total of 40.7 acres and the pond, which is spring fed, is approximately 20 acres in size. This acreage is under a 25-year lease from the Department of Transportation. See **(Figure 1)**

Frenchtown Pond is partially surrounded by single family housing. Development of unoccupied lots is progressing rapidly. In the past three years, north of Frenchtown Pond, there has been significant development of single family housing.

C. History

Frenchtown Pond began as a gravel and watering site during the construction of Interstate 90 in the 1960's. After the freeway was completed, the Highway Commission, recognizing the value of the area as a recreation site, constructed a road system through the area and turned it over to Fish, Wildlife and Parks (then the Fish and Game Commission). In 1972 a lease was signed which granted a recreation site easement to FWP for a fishing access site for 25 years. A new 25-year easment was signed on July 24th 1997. In 1974 construction of picnicking and camping facilities were completed and since 1972 Frenchtown Pond has been managed as a recreation site, popular for swimming, fishing, picnicking and camping.

In the 1980's, Frenchtown Pond was moved from the Fishing Access Program to the State Park Program. Due to unwanted recreational activities and lack of law enforcement, camping was discontinued in 1985. In the event the area ceases to be maintained for recreation, the land will revert back to the MT Department of Transportation.

D. Economic Base

In the Missoula County trade area, there are approximately 88,523 people. Trade center activities, wood and paper products, and the State and Federal Governments contribute to most of the economic base (61%) in the region. West Central Montana is known for its outdoor recreational opportunities and is a key player in the tourism industry, which is the second largest industry in the state.

E. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources

Climate

Frenchtown Pond is considered within one of the more moderate climates in Montana. Temperature variables are not as extreme as in other parts of eastern and northern Montana. Daytime temperatures in the summer months will often reach the upper 90's and will exceed 100 degrees on occasion. Nighttime temperatures may stay relatively high at this time of year. Winter temperatures may range as low as 20 degrees below zero, but this would be extreme. The moisture average is about 17 to 18 inches of precipitation a year. Snow cover may be heavy at times during the winter months.

Topography

The terrain on the site is generally flat with gentle slopes that lead to the pond. The immediate area surrounding the site is quite level with the mountains of Reservation Divide rising to elevations of near 6,000 feet some three to five miles to the north. The Bitterroot Range is to the south about three miles and rises to elevations of 7,600 feet. The Clark Fork River is a mile south.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Frenchtown Pond receives its water from an underground spring. At different times of the year the pond level will fluctuate. This may be due to increased irrigation practices by local farmers. This pond has been utilized for aquatic recreation activities including swimming, for many years with no apparent ill effects to users. However, "swimmers itch" has occasionally surfaced during the hot summer months. A outdoor shower was installed close to the beach area for visitors to rinse off after they have been in the pond. A sign has also been posted on the shower explaining about "swimmers itch" and how to elevate it if it should occur. Algal blooms also occasionally appear during the later weeks of summer. No regular water testing is done on the pond.

Soils and Vegetation

The soils at Frenchtown Pond are primarily gravelly loam with sparse vegetation. Ground cover mainly consists of various grasses. Some mature cottonwoods, willows, and ponderosa pines share the site with newly planted trees such as maple, willow, cottonwood, spruces and pine. Many of these new trees can be found throughout the site.

Wildlife, and Fisheries Resources

Migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and various passerine bird species generally inhabit the site on a seasonal basis. Some small mammals are also occasionally sighted. The fishery in Frenchtown Pond is managed primarily for warm water species. Sunfish includes large mouth bass, black bullheads, northern pike and pumpkinseeds. Brook trout were planted in the pond in 1970 with the hope that they would spawn in the areas where springs are located. It appears, however that the plant was unsuccessful. The pond is considered a fair fishery.

Historical/Cultural Resources

Frenchtown Pond is a reclaimed gravel pit, and there are no historical and cultural resources present. The site has been cleared by the State Historical Preservation Office.

F. FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

Existing Facility Inventory

- Entrance building (5'x8') with electrical and telephone services
- Road system and parking barriers (constructed in 1974)
- One swimming dock

- Entrance and interior signing
- Perimeter fencing and entrance/exit gate
- One group use shelter (built in 1995)
- One small caretaker shed (8'x11')
- One host pad with utilities (sewer, water, telephone)
- One recreational vehicle (RV) dump station
- One restroom complex with running water and flush toilets
- One vault toilet
- Garbage cans and racks
- 10 pads where camping once existed
- Picnic tables, fire grills
- An irrigation pump house

Roads and Parking

The current asphalted road system was built in 1974 and has recently been deteriorating rapidly. The road system was originally designed for day-use parking and camping. Traffic congestion and limited parking space are evident during the peak summer months. The entrance road through the park presently serves two-way traffic. The parking area nearest the beach has limited space and on busy days causes users to park along the interior road system or in the camping pads adjacent to the restroom, resulting in traffic congestion. To solve this problem, the road and parking areas need to be redesigned in a way to allow ample parking and smooth traffic flow through the park. This may be accomplished by moving the entrance of the park to the west end of the site and enlarging the parking areas. See master site plan **(Figure 6)**

Trash Collection:

This service is provided through a contract with local sanitation services during the summer use season. This contract provides a centrally located dumpster. Garbage cans are provided at various locations within the park and are emptied into the dumpster on a regular schedule. The dumpster is emptied once a week.

Restrooms:

Two restrooms exist on the site. A vault toilet located on the east end of the park and flush toilets on the west end of the park. These facilities are cleaned on a regular basis. Replacement of these restroom facilities to meet ADA standards will be completed as funds become available through contributions or appropriations.

Water Supply

A well was drilled in 1973 to provide potable water in the park and is used to irrigate trees on the north side of the park. The well also provides water to the comfort station and the host site. The well's depth is 184' with the static water level at 10'4" and pumping 50 gallons of water per minute. A separate irrigation system was installed on the south side of the pond to water the new trees that were planted to screen the interstate. The system is served by a pump that utilizes the water in the pond.

Security:

Primary law enforcement activities are conducted by the (MFWP) Park Ranger and/or Game Wardens. Supplemental or jurisdictional assistance will be sought from the Missoula County Sheriff's Department and the Montana Highway Patrol. The Frenchtown Pond park manager, park ranger and other (MFWP) enforcement personnel will meet periodically with representatives from the two other agencies. Regular patrols through the park by these agencies will be encouraged.

Fire Prevention and Emergency Services

Current fire protection and emergency services are provided by the Frenchtown Rural Volunteer Fire Department (FRVFD),Missoula Sheriff's Department and the Montana Highway Patrol. Presently the FRVFD use the park for annual training exercises and have also utilized the pond water for filling their tankers to put out fires that have occurred in the area.

G. RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Frenchtown Pond is one of the few public sites in the area offering recreational opportunities such as swimming, picnicking, canoeing and fishing. It is mostly used by local patrons; however, there are many out of state users who venture off the interstate to picnic and swim at the park. Within the Frenchtown area (between Missoula and Alberton) there are six private campgrounds that provide full hookups. Because of private enterprise, the decision was made not to provide camping at the park at this time. If the public desires to see camping as one of the recreational opportunities offered at the park in the future, FWP will revisit the issue. Picnicking and fishing opportunities are also available at Council Grove State Park east of Frenchtown and there are fishing opportunities in the Clark Fork River just south of the Park. For details on these and other recreational opportunities that are close to Frenchtown Pond State Park, **(See Figure 2).**

Trails

There is presently no trail system at Frenchtown Pond. However there has been interest from the users of the park to see a trail developed around the pond. When the park infrastructure is improved a network of sidewalks and a walking trail will be developed. Also, the community of Frenchtown is in the process of securing funding for the development of a hike/bike trail that will follow the frontage road. FWP will continue to work with the community in this endeavor.

Group Use Shelter:

An increase in the visitation and demands on the park resources promoted the Department to build a group use shelter. The shelter accommodates approximately 60 visitors. The shelter is set up on a rental basis and administered according to the Department's group use policy.

Picnic Tables and Fire Grills:

In 1997, pipe frame tables and upright grills were purchased to replace the old wooden picnic tables and fire grills.

Swimming Dock:

A swimming dock was installed at the swimming beach to accommodate the adults and children who do not like to venture out to deep water. There was a floating dock located in the middle of the pond. However, due to safety reasons it was removed. It will not be made available until these safety concerns can be rectified. Also, there have been requests for an additional dock for the east end of the pond.

Fishing

Fishing has become a popular sport at the pond, both for adults and children alike. The pond is a fair fishery for warm water species of fish such as large mouth bass, bluegill, pumpkin seeds and northern pike.

Other Recreational Activities

Other recreational opportunities are available at the pond. These opportunities are; volleyball, kite flying, picnicking, sunbathing and non-motorized boating.

III. VISITATION, BUDGET AND STAFFING

A. Trends Affecting Frenchtown Pond

Visitation

The 1996 Missoula County demographics show a primary trade area population of 88,523, which is up 9% from 1980. Visitor counts at four out of six parks in the Missoula region increased between 1994 and1995. With the increase in population, the demand for recreational facilities has also increased. Most patrons of Frenchtown Pond come from Missoula, Frenchtown and the Alberton areas, all within Missoula County. Annual visitation for Frenchtown Pond is approximately 34,000 people **(see Figure 5).** According to observational surveys taken in 1995, 94% were Montana residents.

Visitor Trends

Montana's population is predicted to continue growing during the next twenty years, although not as rapidly as during the first half of the 1990's. The increasing population will put more pressure on the state's natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Regional, Statewide, and National Trends Affecting Frenchtown Pond

The population in both the United States as a whole and Montana in particular is becoming older, increasingly urban, and more culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse.

B. Budget

The fiscal year 2000 operations budget for Frenchtown Pond State Park is summarized below. The funding sources for operations and maintenance at Frenchtown Pond are the Bed Tax (13%) and the State Parks Earned Revenue Account, (camping, day-use and special use fees) (87%).

Budget summary for Frenchtown Pond State Park for FY 2000. **(Figure 3)**

Personal Services
Salaries
Wages
Employee Benefits

C. Fees:

The 1983 Montana Legislature authorized the Department to charge an entrance fee to ensure that park users paid for a portion of services provided. The daily entrance fee in 1983 was $2.00 per vehicle. Currently individuals may purchase a season pass or pay a day use fee. This pass is in the form of a decal that is affixed to the vehicle windshield. The fee for this pass is $20.00 for Montana residents, $24.00 for non-residence and allows for free day-use at 41 state parks. Persons who have not purchased a season pass and wish to enter the park must pay the day-use fee. Rates are as follows: people six years of age and up is $1.00, under six is free. In 1997 the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission revised fees for state parks. During the term of this plan, day-use fees will be established on a biennial basis through the biennial rule procedure. This procedure requires Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission approval. For a detailed list of user fees generated at the park see **(Figure 4)**.

D. Staffing:

Frenchtown Pond is presently managed as a day-use only site and is directly managed by the Park Operations Supervisor who is based out of the regional office in Missoula. There are no paid personnel that live on the site. However, during the summer recreation season a volunteer host does live on the site.

- Volunteer Host (non-paid staff) helps with visitor services, fee collection, minor maintenance and security.
- A caretaker (paid staff) does the day-to-day maintenance of the site which involves, cleaning the grounds and facilities, garbage collection and minor maintenance of the site seven days a week the caretaker also opens and locks the gates.
- The major maintenance at Frenctown Pond is performed by a maintenance crew based out of the Region Two headquarters.
- Two fee collectors collect fees seven days a week and substitutes as caretaker on occasion.
- A seasonal ranger based out of the regional office, patrols the area five days a week.
- Volunteers are utilized through the state volunteer program. Volunteers may include an assistant caretaker, special project volunteers, and park hosts who assist in visitor services of the site. Volunteer hours contributed may exceed one thousand hours annually.

IV. EXISTING MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

A. Visitor Services

In 1992, a volunteer park host program was established at Frenchtown Pond. The hosts are instrumental in providing visitor services such as dispensing information,

providing security, which may include opening and closing the park, providing light maintenance and assisting in fee collection.

Special Events and Programs

The use of Frenchtown Pond for special events requires a permit. Special events and other programs are typically restricted to the east end of the site which is considered the group use area. The ultimate authority to approve special events lies with the Region 2 Parks Manager. During the recreation season Frenchtown Pond has been a host site for various special events and other programs. These special events and programs are typically sponsored by special user groups or the community. Events consist of Frenchtown Pond Outdoor Fest, Big Sky Thunderbirds Fly-In, and the Garden City Triathlon.

Education/Interpretation

Education/interpretive programs are made available to the users of Frenchtown Pond each season. These programs vary each season and are typically coordinated by the Region 2 Park Management Intern. The Conservation Education Division of Fish, Wildlife & Parks has also been instrumental in providing educational programs such as the Hooked on Fishing Program.

Disabled Access

Frenchtown Pond State Park presently has no disabled accessible facilities. The park was constructed in the early 70's before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed. With the construction of any new facilities, the park will better meet ADA standards.

Concessions

Concessions:

In 1995, a concession was operated at Frenchtown Pond. Items that were made available were hamburgers, hotdogs, pop, candy, popcorn, snowcones and icecream. Due to operation conflicts with FWP and lack of sales, the concession lasted one season. There have been attempts to contract with other concessionaires, however to no avail. Presently the site has one soda dispensing machine provided by Coca Cola.

B. Operations

Seasons and Hours

Frenchtown Pond is open from May 1 - September 30, from the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. The hours of operation are posted at the entrance to the park.

Rules and Regulations

Frenchtown Pond State Park is governed by the Administrative Rules of Montana. These rules regulate areas administered by the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Following is a synopsis of regulations that may be of special interest. Additional regulations are posted in the park.

Weapons: Persons will not discharge any firearm, fireworks, air or gas weapon, or arrow from a bow. This regulation is in effect year-round.

Pets: Pets are prohibited in the park.

Day-Use: This is a day-use only site; no overnight camping is allowed.

Off Road Vehicles: Motorized vehicles are restricted to roadways and parking lots.

Fires: Cook fires are permitted only in established fire grates.

Special Recreation Permits: All groups of 30 or more must obtain a "special recreation" permit to utilize the park. A fee is assessed according to group size. The permit and fee is handled through the regional office in Missoula.

Group Shelter: The shelter is available for group activities and can be reserved. To reserve the shelter, all groups regardless of size, must obtain a "special recreation" permit, and pay the appropriate fees through the regional office in Missoula. The shelter can be used by groups without a reservation if the shelter is not booked at the time.

Watercraft: Motor boats are not permitted on the pond.

Alcohol: Alcoholic beverages are permitted in the park provided they are not in glass containers.

Disorderly Conduct: Disorderly conduct will not be tolerated on the site.

Fishing: Frenchtown Pond is open to all licensed anglers. The western district fishing regulations govern fishing in Frenchtown Pond. Refer to Montana Fishing Regulations for specific rules.

Night Closures: Park closing hours are posted at the entrance to the site. The gate will be closed and locked each evening at 9:00 p.m..

V. IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

Identification of Issues

Due to the aging condition of the facilities and the deterioration of the interior road system at Frenchtown Pond State Park, FWP decided to conduct a park user survey. This survey was intended to get feedback from the users of the site on what improvements they would like to see in the future at the park. This survey also included the issue of camping. Whether or not FWP should allow camping again at the park as a recreational opportunity.

Camping: When Frenchtown Pond was first developed in 1974, camping was a popular activity. In the 1980's the site became unmanageable due to late night parties

and lack of law enforcement on the site. To make the site more manageable, camping was eliminated. Presently, the site is managed as a day-use only site. Through public meetings and surveys, there has been a renewed interest in opening the site to camping. The survey conducted in 1994 shows that 56% of the public would use an overnight campground. However, because of the concern expressed regarding direct competition with private campgrounds in the area, and not having an overwhelming support for camping, FWP will not consider re-instituting camping at this point and time.

Facilities:

Most of the site facilities, except the group-use shelter, swim dock and pump house, were constructed in 1974. These old facilities are in need of annual repair due to age and vandalism. Replacement parts are difficult to obtain. Another concern is that the facilities are not accessible to people with disabilities. The aging facilities need to be replaced and/or updated.

Tree Plantings:

Various species of trees such as Canadian red cherry, white pine, cottonwood, willow and green ash have been planted in the park and an irrigation system installed to keep the trees watered. These trees were planted to help screen the park from the interstate and to provide shade for the park users. As funds become available, more trees will be purchased and planted.

Campground Pads:

Because of the decision to not re-institute camping at this point and time, the existing pads will be removed when the interior road system is updated. If camping is ever brought back to the park in the future, campground facilities could be incorporated into the eastside road system.

VI. FUTURE MANAGEMENT DIRECTION (Issues and Alternatives)

A. Capital Improvements

Planning and Facility Development:

The 1999 Legislature provided capital appropriation funds to begin making improvements at Frenchtown Pond State Park. The improvements will be conducted in phases due to the lack of funds to complete the whole project at one time. See master site plan for proposed improvements (Figure 6).

Proposed Action

The following is a list of the items to be built:

- Build two pre-fabricated comfort stations (flush toilets).
- Replace existing vault latrine with a pre-cast vault latrine.
- Install an outdoor shower
- Build group picnic shelter on west end of park.

- Install a 10' gravel pathway around the perimeter of the pond.
- Develop new eastern beach area with grading and sand
- Expand western beach area with grading and new sand
- Install a roll in dock at the new eastern beach area.
- Plant variety of trees and shrubs along park perimeter to visually screen the interstate and frontage road and plant trees in the interior to provide shade and shelter.
- Install a system to irrigate lawns and new trees/shrubs.
- Grade picnic areas and provide picnic tables throughout the park.
- Construct two sand volleyball courts.
- Construct playground area with playground equipment.
- Build entry station for fee collection and visitor services.
- Build 20'x14' storage building for lawn equipment, maintenance tools, supplies, etc.
- Install three light poles to deter vandalism.
- Provide sidewalk network to connect comfort station with playground area, beaches, and concession areas.
- Provide open space for recreational activities such as volleyball, softball, horseshoes, etc.
- To relocate host pad.

B. Park Operations and Staffing (Resource Management)

Management Objectives

- Continue to manage the park as a day-use only park.
- Promote and manage FTPSP as a family park.
- Promote and enhance safe use of the park.
- Provide for a diversity of opportunities.
- Continue to offer educational/interpretive programs and special events
- Continue the fees at FTPSP. Utilize user fees to help pay for improvements and operations of the park.
- Solicit community support and contributions and promote a spirit of public involvement.

Site Protection Goals

- Upgrade the facilities, as funds become available.
- Implement weed control activities based on the Region 2 integrated weed management plan.
- Plant additional trees as funds become available.
- Increase Security by continuing the volunteer host program and adding additional patrols through the FWP park ranger position.

Operational Goals

- Provide expanded educational/interpretive programs and special events by adding additional family events and programs.
- Re-evaluate hours of operation to accommodate anglers and evening recreationists.

- Increase security through additional patrols through the FWP ranger program and on site host program.
- Increase maintenance through the efforts of the regional maintenance crew and the caretaker of the site.
- Enhanced fee compliance through the staffing of additional fee collectors and increased patrols through the park ranger program.

Maintenance:

Maintenance activities are undertaken to keep the site clean and safe for visitors who participate in a variety of outdoor recreation activities. Maintenance is done by seasonal park staff, and volunteer hosts on a day-to-day basis during the recreation season. Supplemental support is provided by the Parks Division maintenance crew. Maintenance activities include such things as litter and debris pickup, restroom cleaning, fire grill cleaning, group use shelter cleaning, irrigation of trees, sign posting, minor repair, garbage removal, painting and staining, hazard tree and branch removal, mowing and trimming, fencing, etc.

C. Visitor Services

Visitor Accommodations:

Increase recreational opportunities to include:

- Volleyball
- Open space for softball
- Playground equipment
- Additional group use shelter
- Hiking trail around the pond
- Concessions, including boat rentals
- Horseshoe pits
- Provide additional education/interpretive programs and special events
- Additional group use shelter

Fishery Enhancement

Frenchtown Pond is known for its warm water fishery. The pond has not been stocked with fish species since 1985, when it was stocked with rainbow trout. Chadwick Ecological Consultants, Inc. of Littleton Colorado tested the pond in May of 1998. The testing was done in conjunction with the proposed Yellowstone gas pipeline routing. The results are on file at the Region 2 office. Warm water species are self-sustaining and there are no trout in the pond currently. There are no plans to enhance the fishery at the present but we will continue to work with the Fisheries Division on future fisheries management of the pond.

D. Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement will continue to be provided by Fish, Wildlife & Parks and with the cooperation of Missoula County Sheriffs and the Montana Highway Patrol.

Other Services

There is drinking water, an RV dump-station, and flush toilets on the site. A vending machine is available for pop. The master site plan has identified an area for future concessions at the park. We will pursue concessions that may include food sales and boat rentals.

Restrictions:

There is a 25-year lease with the Department of Transportation which will expire 7/24/22. Should the site cease to be managed as a recreation area, it will be reverted back to the Department of Transportation.

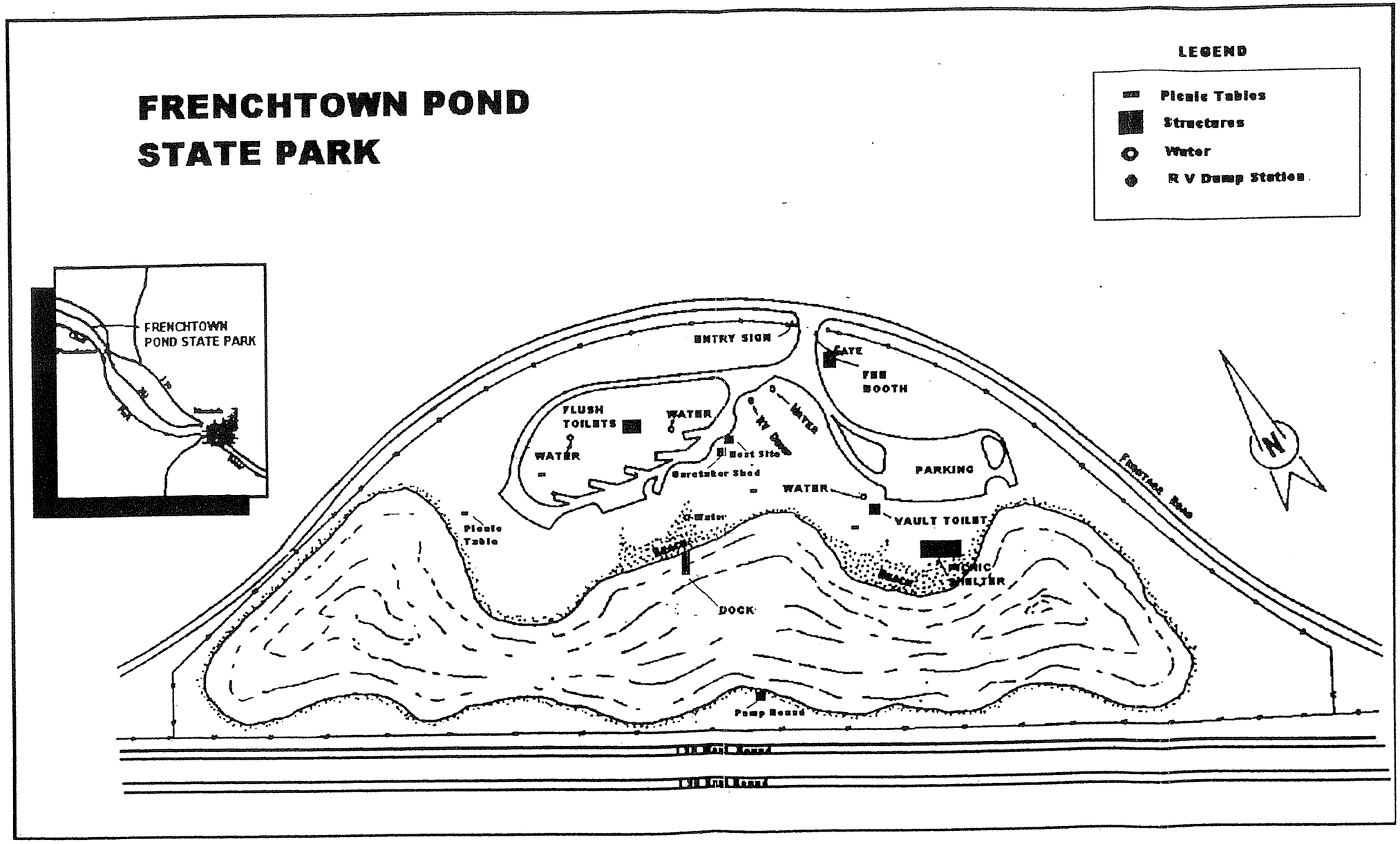
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds were used to construct Frenchtown Pond State Park. The site will need to be managed for outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

VII. CONCLUSION

Management planning is an ongoing process that must react to substantial changes in the physical, social and political climates in which we exist. Toward this end, it is envisioned that this plan will guide administration of Frenchtown Pond during the next ten years.

FIGURES

FRENCHTOWN POND STATE PARK



(Figure 1)

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES NEAR MISSOULA

Site Name	Boat Launch	Toilets	Water	Camping	Day-Use Only	Swimming	Play Eqp	Fishing	Picnic Tables	Shelters	Jogging Trail
Bonner City Park		X	x		x		x		x	x	
Caras City Park		X	x		x				x	x	x
Fort Missoula City Park		X	x		x		x		x	x	x
Greenough City Park		X	x		x		x		x	x	
McCormick City Park		X	x		x		x		x	x	
Jellystone RV Park		X	x	x					x	x	
Jim & Mary's Adult RV Park		X	x	x					x		
Missoula KOA				x		x			x		
Out Post Campground		X	x	x			x		x		
Bigpine FAS		X		x					x		
Forks FAS		X		x							
Forest Grove FAS	x	X		x	x			x	x		
Beavertail Hill State Park	x	X	x	x				x	x		
Beavertail Pond FAS	x	X			x	x		x			
Quartz Flat											
Council Grove State Park		X	x		x			x	x		
Erskine FAS					x						
Petty Creek FAS	x	X			x			x	x		
Natural Pier FAS					x			x			
St. John FAS	x				x			x			
Cyr Bridge FAS	x	X			x			x			
Tarkio FAS	x	X			x			x			
Blue Mountain Rec. Area		X		x							
Patty Canyon Rec. Area		X		x							

(FIGURE 2)

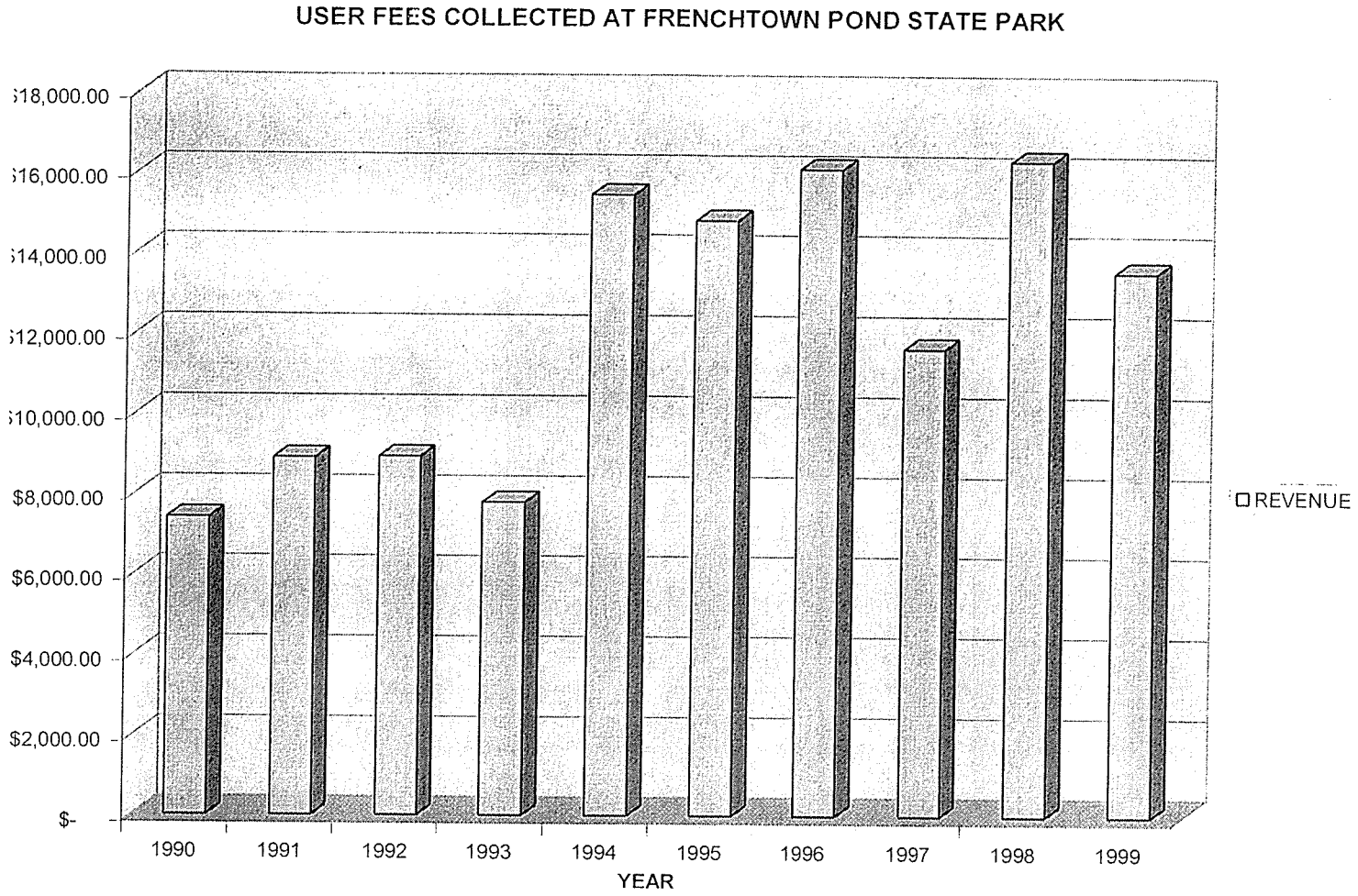
BUDGET SUMMARY FOR FRENCHTOWN POND STATE PARK

The fiscal year 2001 operations budget for Frenchtown Pond State Park is summarized below. The funding source for operations and maintenance at Frenchtown Pond are State Parks Earned Revenue Account (87%) and Bed Tax (13%).

PERSONAL SERVICES	**AMOUNT**
Salaries (.39 permanent and .90 temporary FTE*)	37,671
OPERATING EXPENSES	
Supplies and Materials	1,200
Communications	150
Travel	2,400
Contracted Services	500
Utilities	300
Repair & Maintenance	1,900
Total Operating Expenses	6,450
TOTAL	44,121

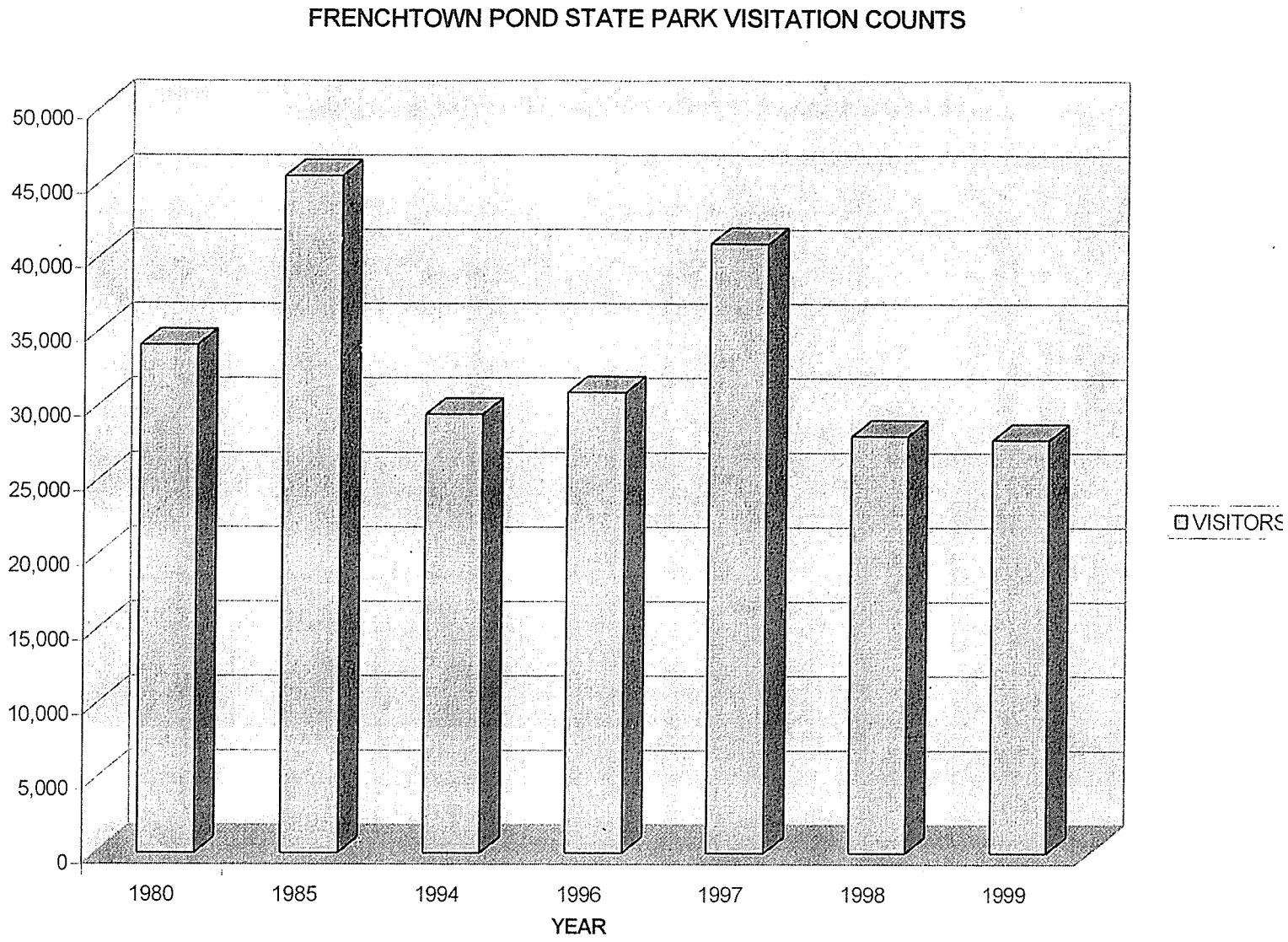
* Abbreviation for "full time equivalent." One FTE is the equivalent of one person working for one year. Thus, one-half FTE (0.5 FTE) could be: one person working six months, or two people working three months each, or three people working two months each, etc.

(Figure 3)



- In 1997 the fee structure changed at Frenchtown Pond State Park. The fees went from $3 per vehicle to $1 per person.

(FIGURE 4)



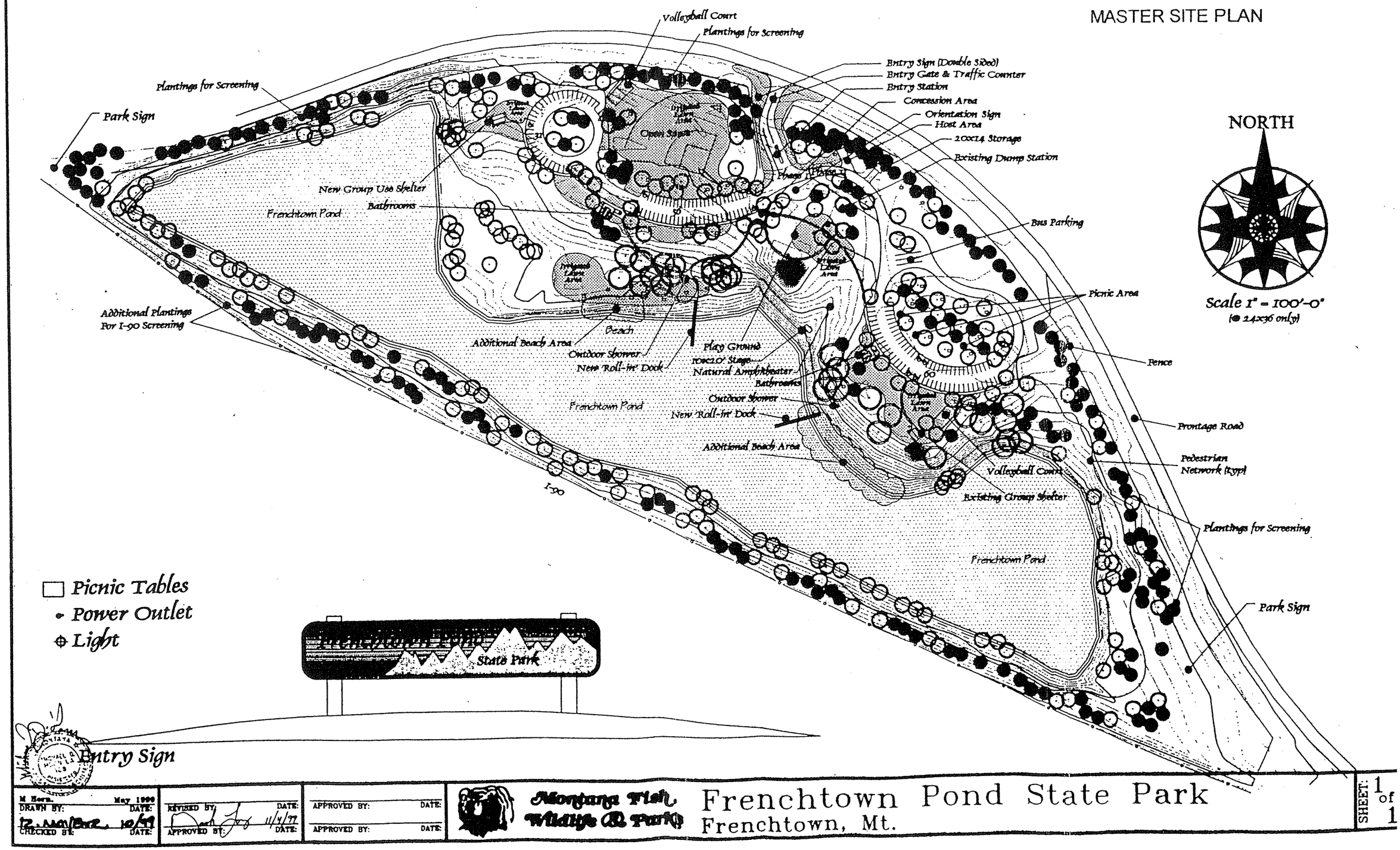
- Visitation for Frenchtown Pond State Park was significantly higher in 1997. This is due to a hot dry summer in 1997.

- There are no accurate visitation counts for 1995 for Frenchtown Pond State Park. The traffic counter used in 1995 was an infrared and traffic counts showed around 69,000 visitors, which is high above the average. For this reason the 1995 counts are not included in Figure 5.

(FIGURE 5)

(Figure 6)

MASTER SITE PLAN



M Horn. May 1999 DRAWN BY: DATE: 12. MAY/BRR. 10/99 CHECKED BY: DATE:	REVISED BY: DATE: 11/4/99 APPROVED BY: DATE:	APPROVED BY: DATE: APPROVED BY: DATE:	Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks	Frenchtown Pond State Park Frenchtown, Mt.

SHEET: 1 of 1

APPENDICES

APPENDIX (A)

Ground Water Research Results

Methods

The seepage meters and mini piezometers were used to examine groundwater exchange at Frenchtown Pond. The seepage meter consists of the top of a 5 gal metal drum that is cut from the drum with0.5 ft sides. A hole is bored in the top of the lid to accommodate a one-hole rubber stopper that is fitted with a tube. A plastic baggie is fitted to a short piece of tygon tubing and the baggie is pre-filled with 100 ml of lake water. Air is removed from the bag and the tube clamped. The baggie and clamped tube are then submerged and attached to the drum lid which has been placed on the pond bottom and "screwed" into the lake bed a few inches. The clamp is loosed with the baggie totally submerged. The meter is left for a duration of time, usually about 1 hour. The clamp is then tightened under water, the baggie removed and the total volume of water in the bag measured. The rate of seepage into or out of the gag is determined by dividing the net volume change by the surface area of the meter and the length of time during which the sample was collected. A net increase in water reveals groundwater discharge to the pond. A net loss of water indicates the pond is leaking water to the groundwater system. Each visit to the pond usually included the placement of 5 to 10 seepage meters parallel and perpendicular to shore.

In addition to the seepage meters, 5ft long pieces of 1/2 inch diameter electrical conduit with a loose fitting carriage bolt in the bottom end were driven into the pond bottom. The conduit was then pulled back about 2 inches to allow the bolt to fall out and thus open the end of the pipe. The water level was measured inside of the piezometer and compacted to the pond water surface position. If the water level in the pipe was higher than the pond level, groundwater was then flowing up and into the lake. A pipe water level lower than the pond surface implies pond water is seeping downward into the underlying groundwater.

Results

The data set is incomplete, however events in 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2000 are reported here and these results are similar to findings in years not reported. Seepage meters were generally placed along the shoreline of the NE Group Area, A (Figure 1). Once additional meters were placed just NE of the swimming area, B, and though not reported in the data set, meters were also placed at the third site, C Mini piezometers were also installed at each of these sites by most of the seepage meters. Results showed positive upward gradients in the mini piezometers indicating groundwater is discharging to the pond along the northern shoreline. Seepage meters showed gains in water during operation. Average inflow rates in ft3/ft2 of pond bed per day are reported in Table 1. Generally, seepage decreases with distance from shore though this is not

always the trend. Thus seepage is highest immediately adjacent to the shore. This is observed in the data sets taken in the spring. The high March rate is only for meters placed parallel to shore at one water depth. The following year a much smaller average rate was completed when meters were placed at varying depths and rates averaged. Generally, rates at the site A are similar in the summer. It appears an order of magnitude higher seepage rate occurs just west of the swimming area, B. In 2000, mini piezometer were placed at intervals of about 100 ft from site A to site B. Piezometers indicated either no vertical gradient of a small upward gradient.

Discussion and Conclusions

Frencthown Pond receives groundwater inflow along most all of the northern shoreline. The rate varies with distance from shore (depth of water) and possibly position along the shore, though a complete data set is absent. Additional groundwater investigations in the Frenchtown area have shown groundwater generally is flowing from the higher topography to the north to the south-southwest towards the Clark Fork River (Figure 1). The location of the pond within this flow system and the data collected along the northern shore suggests the pond is a flow-through pond. Groundwater discharges to the pond along the northern shore and pond water then leaves the pond along the southern to southwestern shore. This is a relatively simplistic view of the pond hydrology. High evaporation rates in the summer may temporally lower the pond water elevation so that pond outflow is reversed and groundwater may flow into the pond from all sides. The timing and duration of such events has not been established. No seepage meter data are available for the southern shoreline. A complete evaluation of the pond hydrology would be of great interest.

TABLE 1

Frenchtown Pond Groundwater Seepage Data Collected by Classes at the University of Montana*

Date	**Discharge cubic ft/square feet per day**	
7/15/96	0.41	Measurements within 11 to 25 ft of shoreline, groundwater discharge to pond, NE Group Area.
	2.52	Measurements within 7 to 20 ft of shoreline, groundwater discharge to the pond, just NW of swimming area.
7/15/98	0.38	Measurements within 8 to 21 ft of shoreline, groundwater discharge to the pond NE Group area.
7/13/99	0.36	Measurements within 10 to 31 ft of shoreline, groundwater discharge to pond, NE Group area.
3/27/00	1.37	Measurements all taken 9ft from shore, NE Group area.
4/1/00	0.051	Measurements between 8 and 19 ft of shore, NE Group area.

- Hydrogeology Field Camp and GW-SW Interaction Seminar taught by William W. Woessner, Dept. of Geology

(Figure 8)

APPENDIX (B)

User Survey

Research Goal

The goal of this research project was to determine if the users of Frenchtown Pond State Park wanted to have overnight camping on the site. And if they did want overnight camping, would they still use the day use area if camping was implemented in an adjacent area. Comments from the public were also needed on other issues, future development and for future management of the park.

Research Methods

Data was collected from day users to determine their views on various questions. Because we had a late start on the season, and we decided to do an informal comment form, as opposed to a scientifically based survey. We decided to call our questionnaire a comment form so it would not be associated with a formal survey.

Frenchtown State Park Users were approached, the intern then would introduce himself and explain that Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks was attempting to collect information for future management of the park, and the intern would ask if they would mind filling out a short comment form. The intern carried six clipboards at least 10 pencils with him. The intern would then hand out the forms on clipboards, give them a pencil and walk over to another group. Depending on the number of people and how spread out they were, the intern would either visit with them while they filled out the form or handed out other forms to people nearby. After handing out all the clipboards he would go back to the first people and collect the completed forms and place them in an envelope. Because of lack of time and staffing we attempted to select times when the park was receiving high use. Comment forms were also completed during low use times. Weather is a factor when collecting data at Frenchtown Pond State Park. Poor weather conditions have a great impact on use at the park, with little to no use on rainy, or cloudy days, and very high use on hot, sunny days. Therefore, most comment forms were filled out on hot, sunny days.

Area

The study area was the Frenchtown Pond State Park area, located outside the town of Frenchtown along Interstate 90. Most people at Frenchtown State Park use the beach area so that is where most of the comment forms were completed, although people were approached all around the pond.

Study Population

The study population consisted of MT residents and nonresidents. Most people were local day users. We only questioned individuals fifteen years of age and older.

Survey Form Design

After viewing several other surveys and questionnaires, we designed our comment form to gather the information we needed. The Department Social Scientist was consulted and made a trip out from Helena to help focus our questions to our target population.

Data and Analysis

Survey Population:	93% of the respondents were Montana residents. 7% of the respondents were not from Montana. 62% of the respondents were Missoula residents. 38% of the respondents were non-Missoula residents. 22% of the respondents were Frenchtown residents. 78% of the respondents were non-Frenchtown residents.
Population Age:	The most common age group is the 26-39 age group (43%). 58% of respondents were in groups of 1-5.
Users	68% of the groups were parents with children 61% were friends (multiple responses).
Frequency:	42% of respondents visit Frenchtown State Park 1-3 times per season. The most popular activities at the park are swimming, sunbathing, relaxing and picnics.
Needs and Wants:	The most popular facilities wanted at the park are picnic shelters, playground equipment, and boat rentals. 56% of the respondents said that they would use an overnight campground. The most popular type of overnight camping unit is the tent with the trailer camper #2. Showers and electrical hook ups were the most popular overnight facilities. 92% of the respondents indicated that they would continue using the day use area even if overnight camping were implemented. This response could be the most important because the majority of people surveyed are most likely day users. The day use could continue to generate revenue (losing only 8%) and additional revenue could be collected through overnight camping.

USER SURVEY

FRENCHTOWN POND STATE PARK DAY USER COMMENTS

SUMMER, 1994

The purpose of this comment form is to gather data from the public for future management plans. Your comments are greatly appreciated.

1) Are you a Montana resident? ___ Yes ___ No
2) Are you a city of Missoula resident? ___ Yes ___ No
3) Are you a Frenchtown resident? ___ Yes ___ No
4) Please indicate your age. (Circle the appropriate response.)
   A) 15-25 B) 26-39

C) 40-60 D) over 60

5) Please indicate the number of persons in your group. (Please circle the appropriate response.)

A) 1-5 B) 6-10

C) over 10

6) Please indicate what type of group. (Please check the appropriate response.)

___ Alone

___ Extended family (e.g., aunt, uncle, grandparents)

___ Multi-family group (non-related)

___ Parent(s) with child(ren)

___ Married couple

___ Friends

___ Other (Please specify)

7) Approximately how many times between May 1 and Sept. 30th do you visit Frenchtown Pond State Park? (Please circle only one response.)

A) 1-3 times B) 4-6 times

C) 7-10 times D) Over 10 times

8) What activities do you participate in at Frenchtown Pond State Park?

(Please check all that apply.)

___ Sunbathing ___ Swimming

___ Fishing ___ Picnics

___ Boating ___ Group activities (specify)

___ Relaxing ___ Hiking/walking

9) What day use services or facilities would you like at Frenchtown Pond State Park? (Please check all that apply)

___ Additional picnic shelters ___ Boat rentals

___ Playground equipment ___ Hard surfaced trails

___ Interpretive nature trail ___ Fishing pier

___ Other (please specify)

10) Would you use an overnight camping area if it were available at Frenchtown Pond State Park? (Please circle appropriate response.)

A) Yes

B) No ... If No, Go to question 13.

11) If camping were available, what type of overnight camping unit would you use? (Please circle appropriate response.)

A) Motor home B) Tent

C) Trailer Camper D) Other (Specify)

12) What overnight facilities would you be willing to pay for? (Please check appropriate response.)

___ Shower facilities ___ Electric hook ups for RVS

___ Water hookups ___ Other (Please specify)

13) Would you continue to use the day use area if overnight camping were implemented in an adjacent area? (Please circle the appropriate response.)

A) Yes

B) No

14) Please share any other comments you may wish to make about Frenchtown State Park.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMENTS. YOUR OPINION COUNTS!

APPENDIX (C)

FRENCHTOWN POND STATE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

DECISION RECOMENDATION

FINAL DECISION FOR THE FRENCHTOWN POND STATE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

A draft Management Plan was prepared for Frenchtown Pond State Park and distributed for public review in August of 2000. This plan serves to establish the overall direction for the provision of visitor services, the management and protection of the recreational resources; and the development of all associated facilities and programs over the next ten years. The plan is a working dynamic document that guides the day-to-day operation of the Park, as well as serving as the basis for management decisions and actions.

The Frenchtown Pond State Park management plan addresses the general concerns of growth and development in the Missoula Valley and how Frenchtown Pond State Park should be managed to retain the qualities for which the park has become known. The plan identifies the current management scheme, the character of the park, issues that are now important, issues that will become important and our recommendations for improvements to the park to attain the goal of providing the Missoula Valley with a unique recreational opportunity.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

A. Capital Improvements

Planning and Facility Development :

The 1999 Legislature provided capital appropriation funds to begin making improvements at Frenchtown Pond State Park. The improvements will be conducted in phases due to the lack of funds to complete the whole project at one time.

Site Protection Goals

- Upgrade the facilities, as funds become available.
- Implement weed control activities based on the Region 2 integrated weed management plan.
- Plant additional trees as funds become available.
- Increase Security by continuing the volunteer host program and adding additional patrols through the FWP park ranger position.

Operational Goals

- Provide expanded educational/interpretive programs and special events by adding additional family events and programs.
- Re-evaluate hours of operation to accommodate anglers and evening recreationists.
- Increase security through additional patrols through the FWP ranger program and on site host program.
- Increase maintenance through the efforts of the regional maintenance crew and the caretaker of the site.
- Enhanced fee compliance through the staffing of additional fee collectors and increased patrols through the park ranger program.

Maintenance

Maintenance activities are undertaken to keep the site clean and safe for visitors who participate in a variety of outdoor recreation activities. Maintenance is done by seasonal park staff, and volunteer hosts on a day-to-day basis during the recreation season. Supplemental support is provided by the Parks Division maintenance crew. Maintenance activities include such things as litter and debris pickup, restroom cleaning, fire grill cleaning, group use shelter cleaning, irrigation of trees, sign posting, minor repair, garbage removal, painting and staining, hazard tree and branch removal, mowing and trimming, fencing, etc.

C. Visitor Services

Visitor Accommodations

Increase recreational opportunities to include:

- Volleyball
- Open space for softball
- Playground equipment
- Additional group use shelter
- Hiking trail around the pond
- Concessions, including boat rentals
- Horseshoe pits
- Provide additional education/interpretive programs and special events
- Additional group use shelter

Proposed Action

The following is a list of the items to be built:

- Build two pre-fabricated comfort stations (flush toilets).
- Replace existing vault latrine with a pre-cast vault latrine.
- Install an outdoor shower
- Build group picnic shelter on west end of park.
- Install a 10' gravel pathway around the perimeter of the pond.
- Develop new eastern beach area with grading and sand
- Expand western beach area with grading and new sand
- Install a roll in dock at the new eastern beach area.
- Plant variety of trees and shrubs along park perimeter to visually screen the interstate and frontage road and plant trees in the interior to provide shade and shelter.
- Install a system to irrigate lawns and new trees/shrubs.
- Grade picnic areas and provide picnic tables throughout the park.
- Construct two sand volleyball courts.
- Construct playground area with playground equipment.
- Build entry station for fee collection and visitor services.
- Build 20'x14' storage building for lawn equipment, maintenance tools, supplies, etc.
- Install three light poles to deter vandalism.
- Provide sidewalk network to connect comfort station with playground area, beaches, and concession areas.
- Provide open space for recreational activities such as volleyball, softball, horseshoes, etc.
- To relocate host pad.

B. Park Operations and Staffing (Resource Management)

Management Objectives

- Continue to manage the park as a day-use only park.
- Promote and manage FTPSP as a family park.
- Promote and enhance safe use of the park.
- Provide for a diversity of opportunities.
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- Solicit community support and contributions and promote a spirit of public involvement.

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There is a 25-year lease with the Department of Transportation which will expire 7/24/22. Should the site cease to be managed as a recreation area, it will be reverted back to the Department of Transportation.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds were used to construct Frenchtown Pond State Park. The site will need to be managed for outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

Public Involvement

Throughout the four years of the Frenchtown Pond State Park management planning process, FWP has provided numerous opportunities for public involvement. Public involvement in the management planning process included open house sessions and an on-site survey conducted in 1994.

Summary of Comments Received During Recent Public Comment Period

The Frenchtown Pond State Park Management Plan Public Review Draft was distributed to over 50 individuals and organizations on August 20, 2000 for a thirty day comment period. Five open houses were conducted prior to the comment period. The first and second was held at the Frenchtown High School, on August 9 and 20, 1997. Seven people attended. The third meeting was held at the Region Two Headquarters on August 21, 1997. One person attended. The fourth and fifth meetings were held at Frenchtown Pond State Park on August 19th and 22nd, 1998. Eleven people attended.

The public comment period began August 20, 2000 and ran through September 18, 2000. Legal notices were published in the Missoulian, and Helena Independent Record. Also, there was a statewide press release and a posting on the Montana State's electronic bulletin board. There were no comments received during the comment period.

It is my decision to adopt the Frenchtown Pond State Park Management Plan.

SIGNATURES:

Regional Two Supervisor _____ 2/7/01

State Parks Division Administrator _____

MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks Director _____ 3-14-01