



Decision Notice

Finley Point State Park Campground Improvement Project

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
January 15, 2013

PROPOSAL

In October of 2012 Montana State Parks (MSP), prepared and environmental assessment (EA) of the Finley Point State Park campground improvement proposal. The EA analyzed the impacts associated with reconfiguring the existing campground and adding additional amenities. Specifically, MSP a division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, proposed eliminating up to 10 of 16 RV sites in the current camp area in order to add space between the remaining sites. MSP would construct a new campground loop upslope with up to 12 individual RV campsites, while adding 5 new tent camping sites and 2 yurts for public rentals. MSP also proposes relocation of the campground host sites and to re-configure and widen park entrance to allow for easier ingress and egress by trailers.

ALTERNATIVE TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

No action. Under the no action alternative, the Finley Point State Park Campground would not undergo renovation and would remain as it currently is.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public was notified in the following manners to comment on the draft EA, the proposed action, and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Helena Independent Record*, *Daily Inter Lake*, and the *Lake County Leader*.
- One statewide press release.
- Public notice on the MSP web site: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/>.
- 30-day public comment period following publication of second legal notice.

15 written responses were received in response to this EA during the comment period. The majority of the respondents indicated support for the project citing improved privacy within the campground, opportunity for solitude and improved aesthetics, while reducing exposure to latrine odor and crowding associated with the current campground layout. Some respondents voiced support for the idea of adding tent sites and yurts for visitors without RVs.

Additionally, respondents noted a variety of concerns associated with this proposal:

South Finley Point Road

Several respondents expressed concern that this project would increase traffic on South Finley Point Road between US Hwy 35 and the park. This four-mile stretch of county road is in poor condition and respondents were worried about safety and continued degradation of the road.

MSP Response: This proposal increase the number of RV campsites by 2 from the current 18. Since the Finley Point State Park campground is full to capacity nearly every day of peak camping season, this increase in RV traffic is anticipated to be minimal. The addition of five tent camping sites and two yurts would likely increase the number of passenger vehicles to the park. MSP agrees that South Finley Point Road is in poor condition and is in need of repair.

Boundary marking and vegetative buffering

Adjoining landowners commented that improved boundary marking and fencing would be needed to prevent visitors from wandering or trespassing onto private property. Comments were also received suggesting vegetative buffering to provide visual screening and noise buffering.

MSP Response: We agree that this proposal would require the addition of improved boundary marking and signage to deter trespassing onto adjoining private lands. Additionally, vegetative plantings will be incorporated into the plan to provide screening in key locations.

Moving sites away from lakeshore

One respondent expressed displeasure with changing the existing campground configuration and does not want to see campsites moved further from the water.

MSP Response: The majority of respondents agreed that the current campground is congested and lacks adequate space for RVs. The current configuration creates significant difficulty for maneuvering trailers and large RVs, and provides little privacy from adjacent campsites. MSP regards the reconfiguration of the campgrounds as vital to improving the camping experience and aesthetic appeal of Finley Point State Park.

Limited day use parking and boat pump location

One respondent expressed concern over available day use parking and the location of the boat pump-out station.

MSP Response: There are no proposed changes to the day use or marina areas of Finley Point State Park. Although these may be valid comments, they are outside the scope of this proposal.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):

Based on the analysis in the EA and comments received, I find **Alternative B: MSP proceeds with campground improvements as proposed** to be the preferred alternative. I have evaluated the EA and applicable laws, regulations, and policies and have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Timing of Project Implementation

This project as described in the EA is contingent upon MSP being in compliance with all applicable zoning and subdivision laws. During the 30 day public comment period, MSP has learned that there may be additional compliance steps that were not originally anticipated in the scope of work. At this time the funding is not available to accommodate these additional costs. Thus, rather than advancing a more costly phased approach for the proposed improvements, the project will be delayed until funding is available for a single construction effort.

Conclusion

The final EA may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One Headquarters located at 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901, or the MSP web site at <http://stateparks.mt.gov/> under Recent Public Notices. Please direct requests and questions to the Flathead Lake Park Manager at 406-751-4575.

In accordance with FWP policy, an appeal may be made by any person who has either commented in writing to the department on the proposed project, or who has registered or commented orally at a public meeting held by the department on the proposed project, or who can provide new evidence that would otherwise change the proposed plan. An appeal must be submitted to the Director of FWP in writing and must be postmarked or received within 30 days of this decision notice. The appeal must describe the basis for the appeal, how the appellant has previously commented to the department or participated in the decision making process, and how the department can provide relief. The appeal should be mailed to: Director; Fish, Wildlife & Parks; 1420 East 6th Ave.; Helena, MT 59620.

David Landstrom
Region One Parks Manager
Montana State Parks

Date

