



MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 21, 2015

Agenda Item: Milltown (Final)

Division: Parks

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:

Background (Brief description of the issue, decision to be made, history, etc.): In August 2015, Montana State Parks received Board approval to evaluate the donation of an approximately 10-acre property immediately adjacent to the Milltown State Park at the Confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers in Missoula County. The vacant land, owned by International Paper, is the park's nearest neighbor to the west in the Confluence area. The parcel is located just south of Highway 200 Bonner Interchange off I-90 and is bordered by Juniper Drive to the north and the Clark Fork River to the south. (Legal description is E ½ NE ¼ Sec. 20 T13NR18W). The property includes river frontage and an important access road to the Confluence Area. Previously the Fish and Wildlife Commission endorsed this course of action in 2011.

Public Involvement Process & Results (Brief description of the type of public involvement and summary of what we heard from the public): An environmental assessment on the proposed project was prepared and released for a 21-day public comment period on November 4. By the close of business on Nov. 25, Montana State Parks had received 22 comments on the proposal, including a letter from the Missoula Mayor's Office. All comments offered unqualified support for acquisition of the parcel.

Alternatives and Analysis (Brief description of alternative solutions with analysis of the pros and cons of each):

A. Preferred Alternative: The Department would pursue acquisition of the subject property, thus enabling the core development of Milltown State Park.

B. No Action Alternative: The Department would not accept donation of the land. IP could pursue a buyer or another entity to accept the donation. Montana State Parks would be challenged by access issues and current development plans at the Confluence Area would need to be reassessed.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale (Brief description of our recommendation to the Board and the reasons for it): Montana State Parks recommends approval by the Board to proceed with the acquisition of the approximately 10 acres for inclusion in the Milltown State Park. Acquisition of the parcel would secure permanent public access to the park via the existing access road and enable MSP to move forward in the development and opening of the park to the public. Acquisition would also preserve and enhance the cultural and historic character of the larger area by ensuring that future improvements to the site would be compatible with Milltown State Park and associated cultural attributes and recreational opportunities.

Proposed Motion (Draft language the Board could use to adopt the agency recommendation):

"I move that Montana State Parks proceed with the acquisition of the approximately 10-acre IP parcel for inclusion in the Milltown State Park."