Draft
Environmental Assessment

Somers Beach Acquisition
for Inclusion in the Montana State Parks System

August 2020

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Somers Beach State Park Acquisition
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

Executive Summary
Somers Beach Acquisition
Draft Environmental Assessment

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to purchase approximately 106 acres of land along the north shore of Flathead Lake to the east of the community of Somers for the creation of a new State Park. While the exact cost of the property will not be determined until after a final appraisal (to be done in September 2020), the preliminary appraisal was $2,840,000. Funding for the project would be provided by a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (pending) with matches from Parks Earned Revenue or General License Fund.

The primary purpose of the proposed land acquisition is to create a new state park for inclusion in the Montana State Park system for the use and enjoyment of the people of Montana and its visitors. The current owners of the property have allowed public access on the site for decades and FWP wants to ensure that access in perpetuity. Public access sites on Flathead Lake are used heavily throughout the year and are consistently at or over capacity, so keeping this site open to the public would help ease congestion at other sites. Also, many of the features of this property, especially the wide, flat sandy beach that emerges at low pool level are unique to this area and not available at other state parks on Flathead Lake or elsewhere in the state.

While future development of the park would be covered under a future environmental assessment and would not be fully determined until after extensive scoping and public comment, the site would be suitable for a variety recreational offerings and amenities, such as trails, hand-launch boat access, picnic tables, restrooms, etc. It has not yet been decided whether the site would be open for camping or day-use only. The exact nature and location of amenities and hours of operation would be decided following further assessment of the site, available budget, and public input.

Other benefits of this project include protecting the site from commercial and residential development, which would help maintain the water quality of Flathead Lake. This in turn benefits aquatic life and riparian habitat and the wildlife that depend on it.

The public comment period for this draft EA will extend for 30 days beginning August 12, 2020. Written **comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., September 11, 2020,** and can be mailed to: Somers Beach Acquisition EA; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; 490 N. Meridian Road; Kalispell, MT 59901 or sent by e-mail to: Stevie Burton at Stevie.Burton@mt.gov

Copies of this EA will be available for public review at FWP Region One headquarters in Kalispell; the Montana State Library in Helena; and on the FWP web site **(http://fwp.mt.gov)** under Public Notices**.**

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action**: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to acquire approximately 106 acres along the north shore of Flathead Lake for inclusion in the Montana State Park system.

2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-209, provides authority for MFWP to acquire, develop, operate, and maintain lands or waters for state parks and outdoor recreation.

3. **Name of project:** Somers Beach State Park Acquisition.

4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is the project sponsor**.**

5. **If applicable:**
   Estimated Acquisition Date: Spring 2021
   Current Status of Project Design (% complete): N/A

6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):**

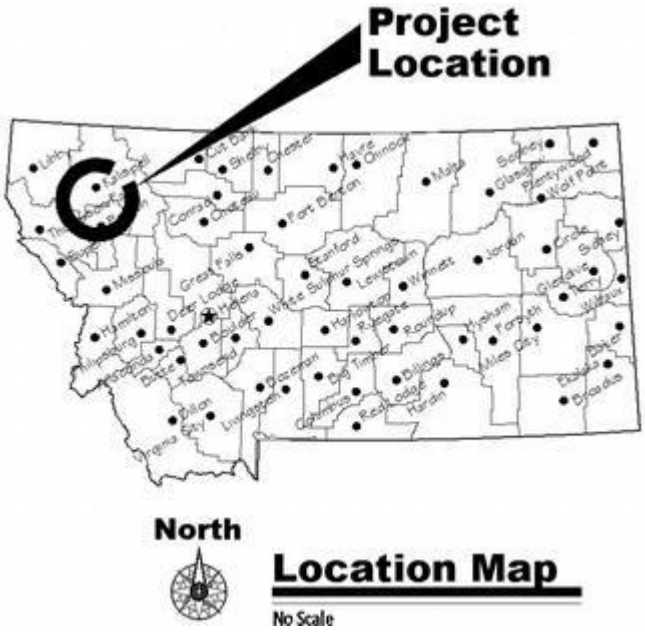

Figure 1: General project location

Figure 2: Vicinity map of proposed project

7. **Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

	Acres
(a) Developed:	
Residential	0
Industrial	0
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	49
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	12
(d) Floodplain	25
(e) Productive:	
Irrigated cropland	0
Dry cropland	20
Forestry	0
Rangeland	0
Other	0

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

(a) Permits:

(b) Funding:

Potential Funding Sources	(approximate) Amounts
Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (pending)	$1,400,000
Parks Earned Revenue (required match for LWCF)	$1,400,000

While the exact cost of the property will not be determined until after a final appraisal (to be done in September 2020), the preliminary appraisal was $2,840,000. The current property owner will hire and pay for the surveyor and pay for half of the appraisal.

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name and Type of Responsibility

US Environmental Protection Agency

- Ongoing site monitoring obligations related to groundwater contamination

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

- Ongoing site monitoring obligations related to groundwater contamination

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

- Oversight of Groundwater Control Area

Flathead County

- Oversight of survey and property transfer
- Weed inspection and management agreement

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the purpose and benefits of the proposed action:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes acquiring approximately 106 acres of land east of the town of Somers, MT on the north shore of Flathead Lake for the purpose of turning it into a new Montana State Park (see Figures 2 and 3). This project is a rare chance to provide more public access to Flathead Lake, which currently has less than 20 public access points along its 185 miles of shoreline, all of which are heavily used by residents and tourists alike. Throughout the year, there is enormous demand for opportunities to recreate on or near the lake; and state, city, and county parks and Fishing Access Sites (FASs) are at or above capacity throughout much of the year. Seeing this need for more recreational access, multiple entities have been working together to add the Sliter property to the Montana State Park System and thus ensure future public access. The preliminary appraisal for the property was $2,840,000, so final appraisal is expected to be between $2.5 million and $3.2 million. Funding would be provided by a pending Land and Water Conservation Fund grant and required matches from Parks Earned Revenue or General License Fund monies. Should FWP pursue acquisition of the parcel, a standard appraisal process would be followed to determine the fair market value of the land.

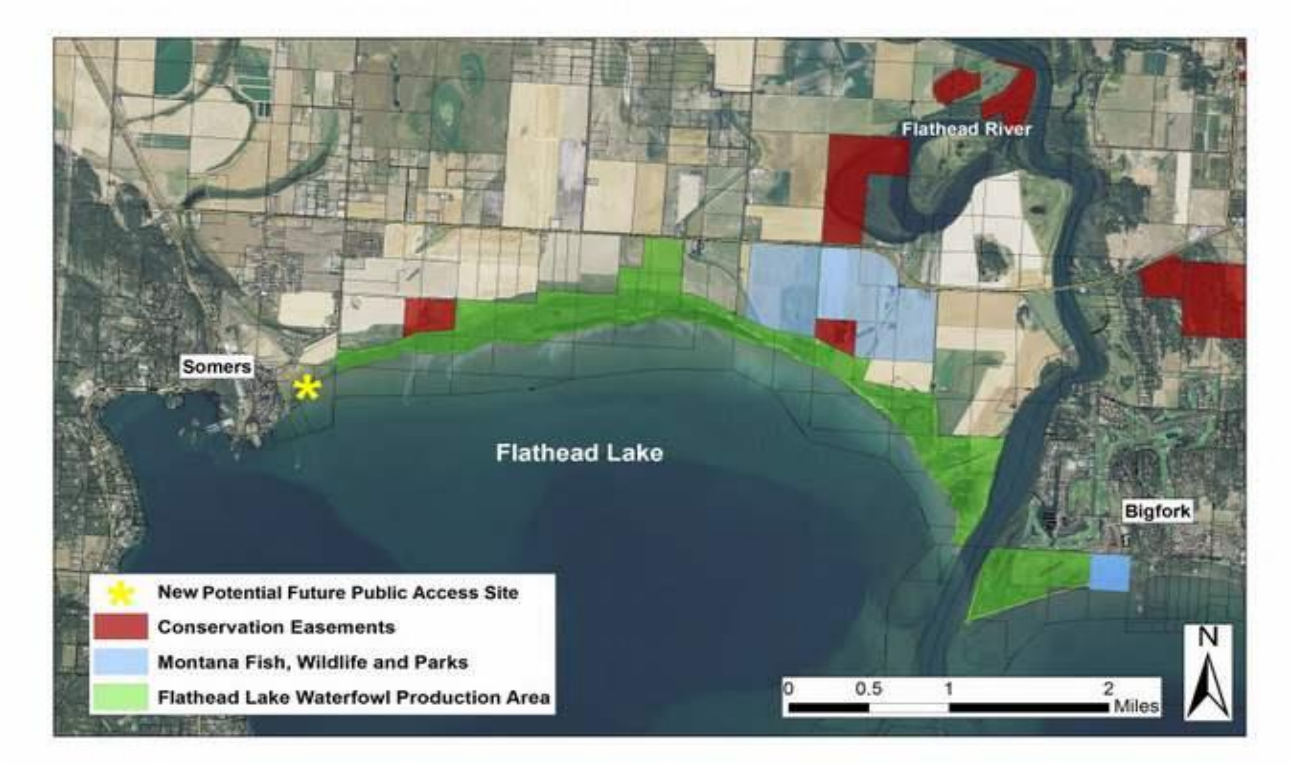

Figure 3. Map showing the location of the proposed new state park and other protected lands in the area.

Figure 4. Photo showing people recreating on 'Somers Beach' in the spring.

Description and History of the Property

The Sliter property is locally known as ‘Somers Beach,’ or ‘Sandy Beach’ and is a 106-acre area comprised of a wide, flat sandy beach that is accessible when Flathead Lake is below full pool, a rocky shoreline to the west, extensive wetlands and riparian areas in the south/center, and some treed and grassy areas inland (see Figures 4, 5, and 6). The northeast corner of the property is currently in use for hay production. It is bordered by the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the east, private homes on the west, and partially surrounds two BN Leasing Corporation (a subsidiary of Burlington-Northern Santa-Fe) parcels in the center (see Figure 7). The Sliter Family acquired most of the property in the 1930’s and generously permitted year-round access to such a degree that local residents view it as the community’s playground and enjoy it for picnics, swimming, kayaking, horseback riding, and even baseball games. The Sliter Family is proud of this legacy and has long wished to convert the property from private ownership to public, and they are deeply supportive of this project.

The Sliter property has remained undeveloped since its acquisition, although some pioneered roads, parking areas, and trails have formed over the years. A few sections of old fencing are present in some areas. While some people park on a small dirt lot just off Somers Rd on BNSF land, many locals also simply walk, bicycle, or even ride their horses over to the Sliter property from their homes. That easy accessibility has been a beloved aspect of the Sliter property for residents of Somers, but the absence of formal management or oversight has led to some resource damage in recent years, including people driving their vehicles on the lake bed and through the riparian areas, fire hazards from campfires, litter, and other issues.

The commercial value of this property is high, and various proposals have been made over the years to purchase the site for condominiums, a high-end RV park, or luxury homes. However, the Sliter family would like to preserve the area for the public, and the family worked with The Flathead Land Trust (FLT) for over ten years to find a conservation and public access-minded buyer. After looking at several other options, discussions began to center on the idea of selling the property to FWP for inclusion as a new state park.

Figures 5 and 6. Photos of some of the wetland and riparian areas on the Sliter Property.

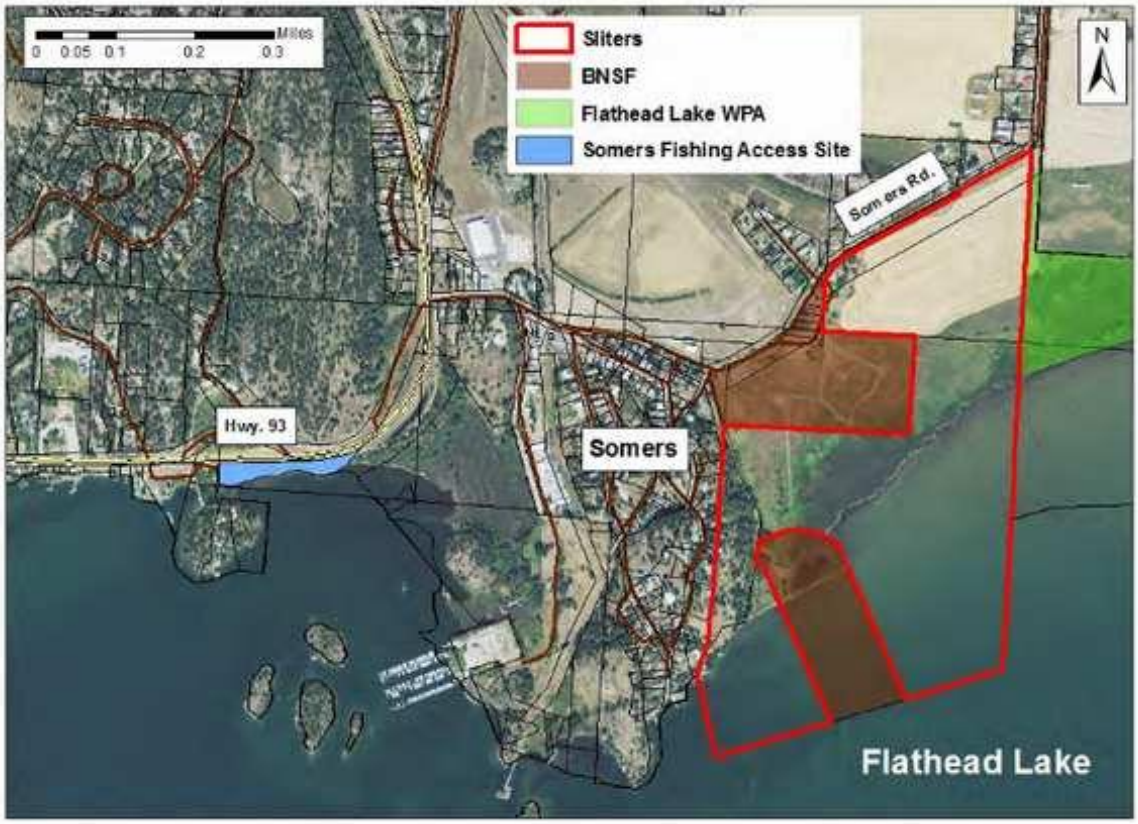

Figure 7. Map showing boundaries of Sliter, BNSF, WPA, and Somers FAS properties

As talks between the Sliter family, FLT and FWP progressed, FLT and the Sliter family launched an effort to gauge public opinion on the possible sale of the property to FWP. Several hundred people wrote emails and letters expressing various levels of interest, support, and concern. Those letters were presented to the Montana State Parks Board prior to their April 2020 meeting to show community support and encourage the Parks Board to move forward with further consideration of the project. The board voted to do so, which initiated the next phase of the project, which includes the preparation of this EA and a formal public commenting process. Copies of those letters are included in Appendix F. Those wishing to make formal public comment should submit their comments to FWP as outlined on page 2 of this EA.

While Somers does already have an FWP-managed public access point in the form of Somers FAS, that site is consistently at or over capacity through much of the year, and the Sliter property currently shares in absorbing recreational use from locals and tourists to the area. The Sliter Property/Somers Beach also provides a different kind of experience than Somers FAS. Somers FAS is good for swimming, picnicking, and launching a motorized boat, and Somers Beach is good for hiking, wildlife watching, cross-country skiing, non-motorized boat use, and experiencing a bit of solitude. Together they offer a wide range of recreational

opportunities for locals and residents and would be a valuable resource for the community of Somers and all Montanans and visitors.

Neighboring Landowners

FWP is aware that some neighboring landowners have concerns about possible noise, trespass, and impacts to their viewshed that could follow if the Sliter property becomes a new state park. FWP is committed to working with landowners to mitigate those concerns, including listening to their input when determining the type and placement of development within the park, and providing effective staffing and management of the park. As the Sliter property is currently not staffed or managed in any way, FWP and other partners anticipate that some problems currently experienced by neighboring landowners, such as nuisance noise levels at night, fire hazards from unattended campfires, and indiscriminate motorized vehicle use would decrease after state acquisition, but other impacts may increase. These issues are discussed more in the following pages.

North Shore Waterfowl Production Area (WPA)

The USFWS, the neighbor to the east, has been a strong supporter of this project, as it would extend public management and protection over the whole bay and help buffer the WPA from more extensive disturbance. The USFWS believes that the WPA would benefit from FWP acquisition of the Sliter property in several important ways:

- FWP would actively manage the site by installing educational and boundary signage and possibly fencing in some areas
- FWP would patrol the park as part of their usual management of the park and remind people not to trespass onto the WPA during closed times
- FWP would create trails which would guide usage away from the WPA
- Providing legal access to the north shore year-round would likely reduce trespass rates on other neighboring lands and on the WPA during seasonal closures. A decrease in trespass issues and other violations would benefit the birds and other wildlife that use the WPA and private landowners in the area.

Flathead River to Lake Initiative

This project also has support from partners in the Flathead River to Lake Initiative, which is an effort by private landowners, land trusts, conservation organizations, and county, tribal, and federal agencies to work together to conserve critical lands along the Flathead River and north shore of Flathead Lake. These lands include over 7 miles of high-quality shoreline, wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, and associated uplands that help sustain excellent water quality, important fish and wildlife habitat, productive soils, beautiful scenery, and outstanding recreational opportunities. Overall, about 2,400 acres along the north shore of Flathead Lake are currently protected by a patchwork of WPA and FWP lands and private conservation easements. These lands help support 229 documented bird species, as well as other wildlife. Adding the Sliter property to state ownership would contribute to this conservation and recreational initiative (see Figures 3, 5, and 6). Additional conservation and recreational partnerships are possible should this project move forward, such as extending bike paths through the state park which could connect to the local Rails to Trails trailhead in Somers.

BNSF Inholdings

As Figure 7 illustrates, the Sliter property considered for FWP acquisition borders two parcels of BNSF property, one northern piece adjacent to Somers Road and one southern piece enveloping a wetland area known as the 'swamp pond' along Flathead Lake. The northern property has been used as an informal parking lot and access point for many years. FLT, FWP and the landowners have been in discussion with BNSF to formalize this access and potentially partner with BNSF on some light development on their northern property, such as parking, access roads and trails, but no final determination has been made at this time. Such a partnership would continue the historical access and use of the area for the benefit of the public. However, the suitability of the Sliter property for use as a state park is not contingent on a future agreement with BNSF.

Environmental remediation likely precludes any access or development on BNSF property near the 'swamp pond' on their south parcel. This area has never been open to public access (formal or informal) and would remain fenced and closed to the public. That environmental remediation is part of the history of these sites, dating back to the early 1900's. Both the north and south parcels were used by Burlington Northern (later renamed BNSF Railway) from 1901 to 1986 to treat railroad ties, which resulted in contamination of soil and water from the creosote used in that process. Creosote is made through the distillation of coal tar and is composed of numerous chemicals, approximately 80% of which are polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Some of these hydrocarbons may be harmful to people. Creosote may enter the body through ingestion or though skin contact. Inhalation of creosote vapor is also possible.

Following soil and groundwater sampling in the 1980's, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that about approximately 14 acres of the Somers BNSF property were contaminated and declared those a Superfund Site in 1984, after which BNSF entered into a Consent Decree with the EPA to clean up the contaminated soils and groundwater. In 1992 the site was taken off the Superfund list and deferred to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act for cleanup activities and soils cleanup began in 1993. Some impacted soils were excavated and removed to a Land Treatment Unit for bioremediation, and some were left in place and covered with clean fill soil. In 2003, EPA and Montana DEQ certified that cleanup of the soils was complete.

While no further soil remediation is planned, the groundwater has not been fully remediated, and a plume of contaminated groundwater sits underneath the north BNSF site and over time migrated under part of the Sliter property. While the plume is stable, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) has adopted a Controlled Groundwater Area (CGWA) for 86.4 acres underneath the BNSF property and part of the Sliter property (see Figure 8). Controlled Groundwater Areas are subject to certain restrictions, such as no new groundwater appropriations. These restrictions are compatible with use of the area as a state park, and the plume is expected to remain stable. Please see Appendix A for the complete GWCA rule, and Appendix B for maps of the groundwater plume and concentrations of contaminants.

Groundwater cleanup began in 1995 and included pumping and treating water through a groundwater treatment system (GWTS) as well as on-site bioremediation. In 2007, DEQ and EPA approved an interim monitoring plan and allowed BNSF to temporarily shut down the GWTS and continue to monitor the site, with reports on its status required every five years. Numerous monitoring wells exist on both the BNSF and Sliter properties and possible future

treatment technologies are being investigated but no active cleanup is ongoing at this time. Semi-annual sampling of the municipal well has shown no contaminants of concern are present in the municipal water system and FWP is confident EPA and DEQ will conclude that the properties are suitable for use as a public recreation site. Please see a letter of support from BNSF in Appendix C.

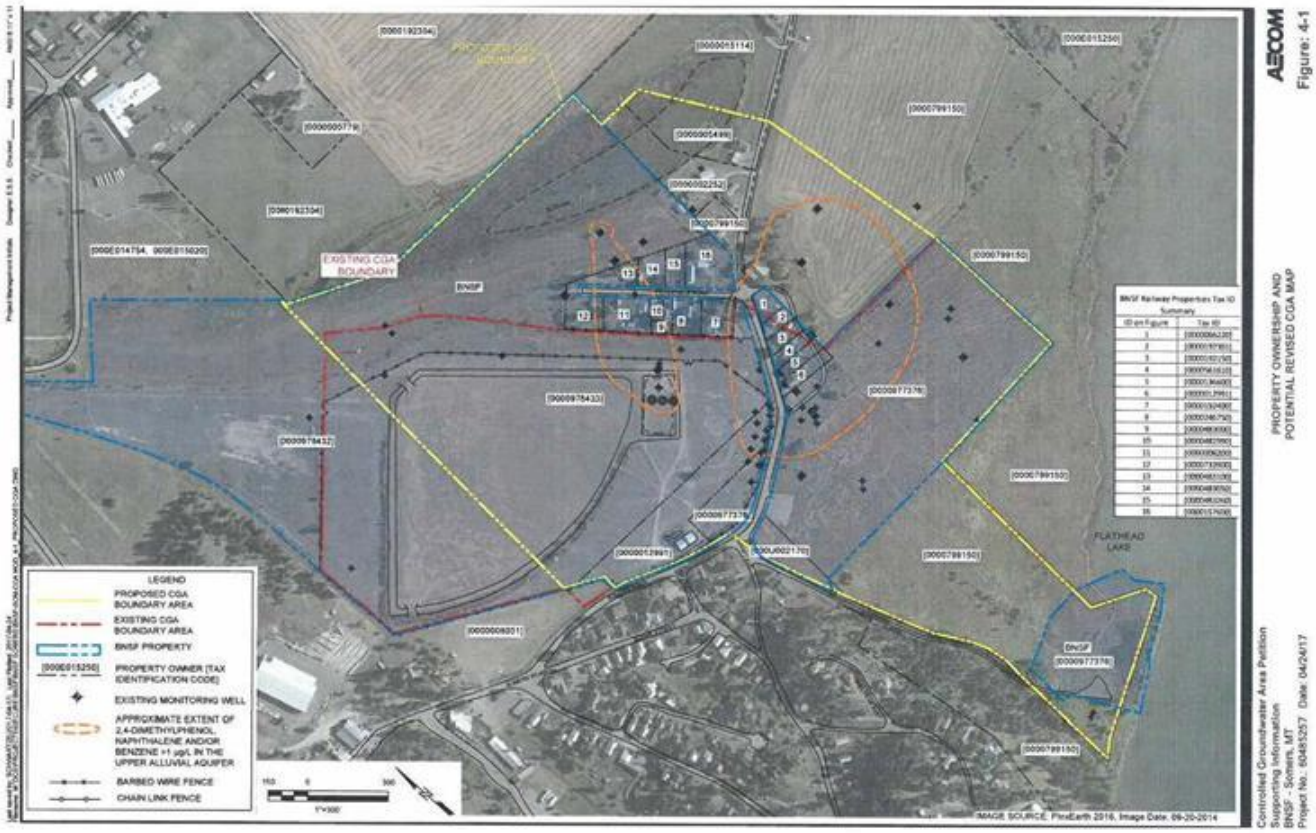

Figure 8. Controlled Groundwater Area of project vicinity.

<u>Shoreline Erosion</u>

The north shore of Flathead Lake has been eroding at higher than natural rates due to several factors, including decades of lake level regulation, shoreline development and the proliferation of other hardened structures along the lakefront. Historically, the level of Flathead Lake rose and fell by about 10 ft throughout the course of the year, but the Séliš, Ksanka and Qĺispé Dam (formerly known as Kerr Dam) has been holding the lake level at full pool elevation during summer since its construction in the 1950s. Decades of maintaining an extended full pool season for the summer months has concentrated wave action at a single lake level elevation, resulting in a steady loss of fringing wetlands due to wave erosion. It is estimated that about 500 feet of shoreline on the Sliter property that was once primarily wetlands has eroded to varying degrees over the past 30 years, up to 200ft inland in some places. Another 1,400 feet of shoreline on the Sliter property has also been eroding, but at a slower rate. The shoreline along the south BNSF parcel has not been eroding, due to a hard erosion control structure constructed in the early 1990's south of the swamp pond. From 1985 through 1993, contaminated soils near Flathead Lake were excavated and treated, some of which were

reburied and covered with clean fill soil. BNSF then placed riprap along a portion of the lakeshore to protect that area where the clean fill soil was placed as a mitigation requirement. That erosion control structure likely exacerbated the wave erosion of the Sliter property.

The Sliter Family has been working with the Flathead Land Trust and the North Shore Flathead Lake Shoreline Restoration Project to try to address the ongoing shoreline erosion on their property for the past 10 years and a plan to do so has taken shape. The Flathead Conservation District provided funding for consultant Mark Lorang with Freshwater Map, Inc. to develop a design and cost estimate of the needed shoreline stabilization of the Sliter property and that design is complete and ready for implementation. The design plan calls for the construction of a 'dynamic gravel beach', which is a three-dimensional gravel beach system that has been used in several other areas around the lake with good results, including the adjacent WPA and nearby Osprey View Fisheries Conservation Area.

The goal of the proposed stabilization system is 1) stop the loss of existing wetlands on the Sliter property due to wave erosion, and 2) provide a natural transition from the nearshore aquatic environment into adjacent wetlands that maintains a hydrologic connection with the lake. The hydraulic process that will shape the beach will also maintain and enhance the growth of wetland plants (Lorang, 2019). Please see Appendix B for maps of the affected area and the complete wetland restoration proposal.

The shoreline stabilization project is currently moving forward, with necessary permits being obtained. FWP would complete the work at a later date following the subsequent park design process and would negotiate a purchase price hold-back for shoreline stabilization work. Portions of the shoreline would likely have to be closed for several weeks while that work was completed.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, FWP would not acquire the Sliter Property. It is unclear what would happen to the property in that case. The Sliter Family could sell it to a commercial or residential developer, or to another conservation buyer. If the former, the public would almost assuredly lose access to the site, and the community would lose a recreational resource they have long used and valued. Development would also likely result in negative impacts to the site, with unknown consequences to the various habitats within the property and fish and wildlife that use the area.

If no action is taken, FWP would lose a rare opportunity to acquire property on Flathead Lake that is suitable for public access and recreation. As land values escalate and suitable properties become scarce, the potential for acquiring future public access to Flathead Lake diminish.

Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action

In the preferred alternative, FWP would purchase the Sliter Family property to develop a new Montana State Park. Like all the state park units on Flathead Lake, the acquisition of the Sliter property would ensure continued public access for the parcel and would potentially offer additional recreational opportunities and amenities for the public. While the exact nature and location of those amenities has yet to be decided, they could include toilets, trails, picnic shelters, camping and/ or cabin rentals, and a hand-launch boat area.

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

The existence of contaminated groundwater on neighboring BNSF lands and the groundwater plume that extends under a portion of the Sliter property requires FWP to work closely with DEQ, DNRC, and EPA to continue to mitigate that contamination in the future, probably for the next 20 years and possibly longer. FWP would not be liable for any of that mitigation, and all parties are comfortable that the creation of a new state park is compatible with any future mitigation activities on Sliter property or neighboring BNSF lands. FWP would work closely with BNSF, DEQ, DNRC, and EPA during future park planning to ensure that proposed development in the area of the plume would not interfere with mitigation activities and that human health and safety would always be protected.

3. Private Property Regulatory Restrictions:

Actions described in this environmental analysis do not regulate the use of private, tangible personal property, and therefore do not require an evaluation of regulatory restrictions on private property.

PART VI. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

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

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
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 positive			1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

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

1. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property by FWP and does not include in-depth analysis of development or physical alteration of the property. If the property is acquired, any proposed future development would be the subject of another EA available for public comment. However, if the Action Alternative is chosen and FWP does acquire the property for use as a new state park, a minimum level of development commensurate with use as a state park would follow, which would include some parking, roads, trails, sanitary facilities, etc., all of which would cause minor disruption, displacement, compaction, etc. to area soils. FWP Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be following during all phases of future development and construction.

1d. The proposed lakeshore stabilization work described on page 10 and in Appendix D would positively impact the Sliter property and the larger

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

Northshore Bay. However, it is unclear whether that work would likewise proceed if the No Action Alternative is chosen and FWP does not acquire the property.

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

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

2a. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property by FWP and does not include development or physical alteration of the property. If the property is acquired, any proposed future development will be the subject of another EA available for public comment. However, if the Action Alternative is chosen and FWP does acquire the property for use as a new state park, a minimum level of development commensurate with use as a state park would follow, which would include some use of heavy machinery for the building of parking areas, roads, vault toilets, etc. That construction work would result in minor, temporary emissions of air pollutants and deterioration of ambient air quality. FWP Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be following during all phases of future development and construction.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2b. While design plans have not been developed yet, it is assumed that toilets would be provided in some capacity, which can sometimes create objectionable odors.

3. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**		
a. ∗Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		yes	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.)						
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. Other:		X				

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

3b. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property by FWP and does not include development or physical alteration of the property. If the property is

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

acquired, any proposed future development would be the subject of another EA available for public comment. However, if the Action Alternative is chosen and FWP does acquire the property for use as a new state park, a minimum level of development commensurate with use as a state park would follow, which would include the construction of parking areas and possibly interior roads. That development could cause some minor changes to drainage patterns and the rate and amount of surface run-off. FWP Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be following during all phases of future development and construction.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property by FWP and does not include development or physical alteration of the property. If the property is acquired, any proposed future development will be the subject of another EA available for public comment. However, if the Action Alternative is chosen and FWP does acquire the property for use as a new state park, a minimum level of development commensurate with use as a state park would follow. That development could negatively impact the diversity and abundance of plant species on the Sliter Property. However, if FWP gains ownership of this parcel, managers would initiate a weed control program which could include spraying, biological control, and hand pulling as needed. MCA 7-22-2154 requires Flathead County's approval of a weed management agreement and inspection. The diversity of the

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

remaining plant community would likely increase as a result. The overall impact to the property is likely neutral.

4e. An accurate report detailing the types and amounts of weeds on the site is not available at this time, but from its location and state of development it can be assumed that there are noxious weeds common to the area. This may include spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, St. Johnswort, commons tansy, houndstongue, Oxeye daisy and other species.

** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X			5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5b.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X			5b.
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.)						
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.)						
j. Other:		X				

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

5b. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property by FWP and does not include development or physical alteration of the property. If the property is acquired, any proposed future development will be the subject of another EA available for public comment. However, if the Action Alternative is chosen and FWP does acquire the property for use as a new state park, a minimum level of development commensurate with use as a state park would follow. That development could negatively impact the diversity and abundance of animal species on the Sliter Property. However, having FWP acquire the site could positively impact wildlife through active management of the site and visitors. The neighboring WPA would also likely benefit, as FWP would work with USFWS to reduce trespass and other illegal use on the WPA, particularly during the nesting season when waterfowl are most vulnerable. Overall, the proposed action would likely be neutral or positive for wildlife on the Sliter property and on adjacent lands.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ***				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ***	**Comment Index**
	Unknown *	**None**	**Minor ***	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		X	6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. FWP acquisition of the Sliter property could cause an increase in existing noise levels. While the Sliter property is already often heavily used, the conversion of the property from private to public would likely draw more visitors, which could result in more noise. Noise is one of the biggest concerns shared by neighboring landowners. Plans for future development and management of the park would examine noise issues carefully and FWP would continue to listen to neighboring resident's concerns and seek to find a balance between providing recreational opportunities for users of the park and minimizing impacts to neighboring residents. Additionally, active management of the park as would occur under FWP ownership would likely

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

eliminate nuisance noise that sometimes occurs at present, especially at night. Other examples of mitigating measures include prohibitions on loud noises and enforcement of quiet times. Overall, noise issues may increase slightly during the day due to increased visitation but will likely decrease at night due to active management and enforcement of rules and regulations.

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

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

7b. The proposed action is supported by the USFWS (the neighboring landowner to the west) and by partners in the Flathead River to Lake Initiative (FRLI). The FRLI involves private landowners, land trusts, conservation organizations, and county, tribal, and federal agencies working together to conserve critical lands along the Flathead Rivera and north shore of Flathead Lake. These lands include wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, and associated uplands that help sustain water quality, important fish and wildlife habitat, productive farm soils, and recreational opportunities. Converting the Sliter property to public ownership would permanently protect the conservation and recreational value of the property and is strongly supported by many in the community. The USFWS believe that FWP ownership of the Sliter property would particularly benefit the adjoining WPA through active management and education of visitors, thereby reducing trespass onto the WPA from the property and associated negative impacts to waterfowl and other wildlife.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

7d. Residences most likely to be impacted by the proposed action are located along the western boundary of the Sliter's property. Several of these residents weighed in during informal scoping opportunities in March of 2020, and while some supported the idea, others were against it. The most common concerns centered around the possibility of increased noise, traffic, trespass, and safety issues should the area become a state park (see Appendix F). FWP is committed to working with neighboring residents and landowners to address their concerns should the project move forward. Formal public input is being solicited through this MEPA process and will be considered prior to any decision being made on whether to acquire the property for inclusion in the state park system. Should FWP acquire the property, public comment would again be solicited and considered prior to future development of visitor amenities.

In general, however, active management as would occur under state park status would likely result in fewer conflicts with and impacts to neighbors as that which currently occurs with unmanaged access and use of the property. It is unknown how neighbors would be affected in the future if the No Action Alternative is adopted and FWP does not acquire the property.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ***				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ***	**Comment Index**
	Unknown *	**None**	**Minor ***	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		yes	8a.
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		yes	8c
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)						
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. There is a very low risk that the mitigation actions taken on the BNSF sites could fail, which could release hazardous substances (creosote-contaminated water) into

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

Flathead Lake. While the proposed action of acquiring the Sliter Property for a new state park would not increase this risk, there is a small chance that people recreating at the future state park would be exposed to creosote-contaminated water.
There is also a chance that visitors to the park would climb or otherwise breach the fence around the 'swamp pond' on the south BNSF parcel, which could also expose them to hazardous substances. However, that risk already exists and would continue to exist under the No Action Alternative, so the overall risk to people would remain unchanged or improve under the Proposed Action. If this project moves forward, FWP would work with BNSF in order to reduce visitor's involvement with the swamp pond area. The contaminated groundwater plume underneath the properties presents minimal to no risk to public health as long as it remains undisturbed. FWP is committed to leaving the plume undisturbed in any future park development.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9d. While the Sliter property is already used by the public, its conversion to a state park could result in more visitation to the area, which could result in a small increase in commercial activity in the community.

9e. While the Sliter Property is already used by the public, its conversion to a state park could result in an overall increase in visitation to the site, which would likely include a

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

corresponding increase in vehicle traffic on Somers Rd and possibly other neighboring streets. In the immediate term, traffic and parking patterns would likely remain as they currently are with vehicles parking at the improvised gravel lot on BN property, and along Somers and Burnsville Roads. If FWP acquires the property, a subsequent environmental assessment and public involvement process would help identify locations to develop parking lots and how to deal with potential overflow parking issues.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. The proposed action would result in the creation of a new state park to be added to the Montana State Park system.

10b. Montana FWP is required to make payments to counties in a sum equal to the amount of taxes payable as if the property were owned by a private citizen (MCA-87-1-603).

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10e. Until the site is fully developed, site generated revenue will be limited to non-resident day use fees.

10f. If the Sliter property is acquired by the state, there would be interim staffing and operational costs prior to the construction of visitor amenities. Personal service costs would cover seasonal and full-time staff who would be involved with managing and maintaining the park for visitor use. FWP would provide routine and frequent coverage and staff presence during peak use periods to provide visitor services, minimize conflicts, address neighbor concerns, and inform visitors of use restriction on the neighboring waterfowl production area. Initial, interim annual operations costs would be incurred associated with providing public sanitation, trash removal, site maintenance, boundary marking, noxious weed control and other operational costs. The total estimated annual operations and maintenance costs during the interim period is approximately $96,000. Once acquired, state parks staff would develop a subsequent operations and maintenance budget commensurate with the level of development proposed. That budget would be included in a future EA addressing that potential development.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

11a. The proposed action involves only an acquisition of property by FWP and does not include development or physical alteration of the property. If the property is acquired, any proposed future development will be the subject of another Environmental Analysis available for public comment. However, if the Action Alternative is chosen and FWP does acquire the property for use as a new state park, a minimum level of development commensurate with use as a state park would follow. Some neighboring landowners have expressed concern that any development of the site would negatively impact their view. They were especially concerned about the possibility of parking lots or campgrounds with RVs being visible from their homes or yards. If FWP acquires the property for inclusion in the state park system, public input would be solicited for the development of amenities. Viewshed conservation and mitigative measures such as vegetative screening would be an important consideration.

11c. The proposed acquisition and creation of a new state park would create new recreational opportunities and would thereby likely increase tourism to the area. Some members of the community are excited about this and some have concerns about how their neighborhood may be changed.

Positive impacts would include a boost to the local economy from additional visitors to the area and permanent public access to that part of the bay and lake. Negative impacts to local residents would be most readily observable in the form of increased traffic and potentially noise. This would impact neighboring properties the most. Active management of the park, including having staff on-site, regular patrols by FWP law enforcement, the development of designated parking, trails, and other amenities; educational signage, and other actions would help alleviate potential negative impacts. FWP will also conduct public scoping prior to developing a plan for amenities offered at the park, and potential mitigation strategies would be discussed in the resulting development EA. Please see Tourism Report in Appendix E.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

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

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. The proposed action would not destroy or alter any site, structure or object of historic importance. Prior to any development occurring on the site, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would be consulted and their recommendations followed.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Un-known *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources 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.)						
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13e. This project has generated a great deal of interest from the public in general and especially from people who live in Somers and the surrounding area. An effort led by FLT and the Sliter family in March/April of 2020 to gauge public support for the project drew several hundred letters from interested people. Respondents commented on a wide range of issues, but most people expressed a desire to keep the area open to public access. Those who were in opposition frequently cited concerns over impacts to neighboring landowners and increased traffic on Somers Rd and surrounding streets. While FWP and partners believe that state ownership and active management of the site will ultimately result in fewer negative impacts to neighbors and others than the no-action alternative, it is unknown whether the proposed plan will result in substantial debate or controversy among concerned citizens.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Overall, this EA found that the proposed action of acquiring the Sliter property for inclusion in the Montana State Park System would provide a wide range of recreational and conservation benefits for residents of Montana and visitors to the state with few negative impacts.

While there could be some negative impacts to neighboring landowners from increased use and development of the property should it become a state park, those impacts would be mitigated by FWP assuming active management of the property, and some issues, such as some resource damage and excessive noise at night, are expected to improve under FWP management. If the No Action alternative is adopted and FWP does not acquire the property, it is unknown what would happen to the property and what negative impacts could result from that path. The issue that is of most concern to nearly every respondent during earlier scoping exercises is that of maintaining public access to the property, which the Proposed Action ensures, and the No Action does not.

The ongoing environmental remediation of the contaminated groundwater on neighboring BNSF property and underlying part of the Sliter property is an issue that requires FWP to continue to work closely with the EPA, DNRC, and DEQ as the project moves forward, but all parties are comfortable that the property is suitable for use as a public recreation area. Any potential risks to human health are likely the same under the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives.

This EA found no significant impacts to the human or physical environment from the Proposed Action.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

   The public will be notified by way of a statewide press releases in the *Helena Independent Record* and *The Daily Interlake, and the Flathead Beacon,* and by public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: **http://fwp.state.mt.us/publicnotices**. Individual notices will be sent to those that have requested one.

2. **Duration of comment period, if any.**
   A 30-day comment period is proposed. This level of public involvement is appropriate for this scale of project.

   The public comment period will run from August 13, 2020 until 5:00 pm on September 12, 2020.

Comments should be sent to:

Stevie Burton, Somers Beach Acquisition EA; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; 490 N. Meridian Road; Kalispell, MT 59901 or sent by e-mail to: Stevie Burton at Stevie.Burton@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)?

No, an EIS is not required. Based on an evaluation of the primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts to the physical and human environment, this environmental review found no significant impacts from the proposed action. In determining the significance of the impacts of the proposed project, FWP assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact, the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur. FWP assessed the growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact, the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected; any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed action that would commit MFWP to future actions; and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. As this EA revealed no significant impacts from the proposed actions, an EA is the appropriate level of review and an EIS is not required.

2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Dave Landstrom
Region 1 Parks Manager
490 N. Meridian Rd
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 751-4574

Linnaea Schroeer
MEPA Coordinator
1400 S. 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718
(406) 444-3378

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Parks Division
- Wildlife Division
- Fisheries Division
- Design & Construction Bureau
- Lands Section
- Legal Section

Responsive Management Unit

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

US Environmental Protection Agency

US Army Corps of Engineers

Burlington-Northern Santa Fe

Flathead Valley Land Trust

Appendices

Appendix A: Controlled Groundwater Area rule adoption

Appendix B: Maps showing location of groundwater plumes and concentrations for benzene, naphthalene, and 2,4-dimethylphenol.

Appendix C: Letter of Support from BNSF

Appendix D: Wetland Restoration using a Dynamic 3D Gravel Beach System-Proposal

Appendix E: Tourism Report from Montana Department of Commerce

Appendix F: Letters of Interest solicited from Flathead Land Trust and Sliter Family in March/April 2020

Resources:

Lorang, M, S. 2017. *Assessing Shoreline Restoration on the North Shore of Flathead Lake.* Final report submitted to Energy Keepers Incorporated, A Corporation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe Polson, MT 59860.

Lorang, M, S. 2016. *Assessing Shoreline Restoration on the North Shore of Flathead Lake.* Final report submitted to Energy Keepers Incorporated, A Corporation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe Polson, MT 59860.