



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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May 21, 2004
LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks proposes to build a trailhead and ADA accessible trail near the Morony Apartment at the Morony town site.

This trailhead at Morony will serve as the primary access to the Sulfur Springs portion of the Lewis and Clark Portage National Historic Landmark. The Trailhead consists of a semi-circular parking lot, a CXT Gunnison model pit latrine with windscreen and a multi-use orientation/informational/interpretive kiosk. As part of the project an approximate 900 foot trail will be constructed to a scenic overlook. While this trail segment is not located on FWP property nor will construction use FWP funding the segment is included in this environmental analysis. The proposed trailhead would be located on land owned by PPL Montana and Montana FWP. The trailhead would occupy approximately ½ acre of land. Site dimensions are approximately 250 feet in length and 150 feet in width.

The benefits of this trailhead are to provide public access in an environmentally acceptable manner to the Sulfur Springs Trail. Interpretation of the historic and natural features is included in the Forest Service trail leading from the Trailhead to Sulfur Springs. Trail and trailhead development is consistent with anticipated use during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Providing a semi-hardened trailhead and trail will concentrate use on the developed trail and trailhead reducing use of the user-developed trails and parking areas that are scattered around the Morony area.

Attached is a copy of the Draft Environmental Assessment evaluating this project.

Questions about this project should be directed to Giant Springs State Park Manager Dan Smith at 454-5858.

Comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. Monday, June 21, 2004 and can be mailed to:

Sulfur Springs Trailhead
Giant Springs State Park
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405

Or e-mailed to: dsmith@state.mt.us

In an effort to reduce paper waste and unnecessary mailings we would appreciate a note or a call if you do not wish to be on our Environmental Assessment mailing list. If you have any friends or neighbors who wish to be on the list just call and we will add them to the list.

Thanks for your interest and help with this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Aderhold". The signature is fluid and written in dark ink.

Mike Aderhold
Regional Supervisor

DRAFT

MEPA/NEPA/23-1-110 MCA CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action

Parking lot and trailhead development.

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action

FWP has authority to provide development and access for public recreation. 23-2-101 MCA.

3. Name of Project

Morony/Sulfur Springs Trailhead

4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)

FWP, 4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls MT 59405 and
PPL-Montana 45 Basin Creek Rd, Butte MT 59701

5. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date

July 1 2004

Estimated Completion Date

August 15 2004

Current Status of Project Design (% complete)

95%

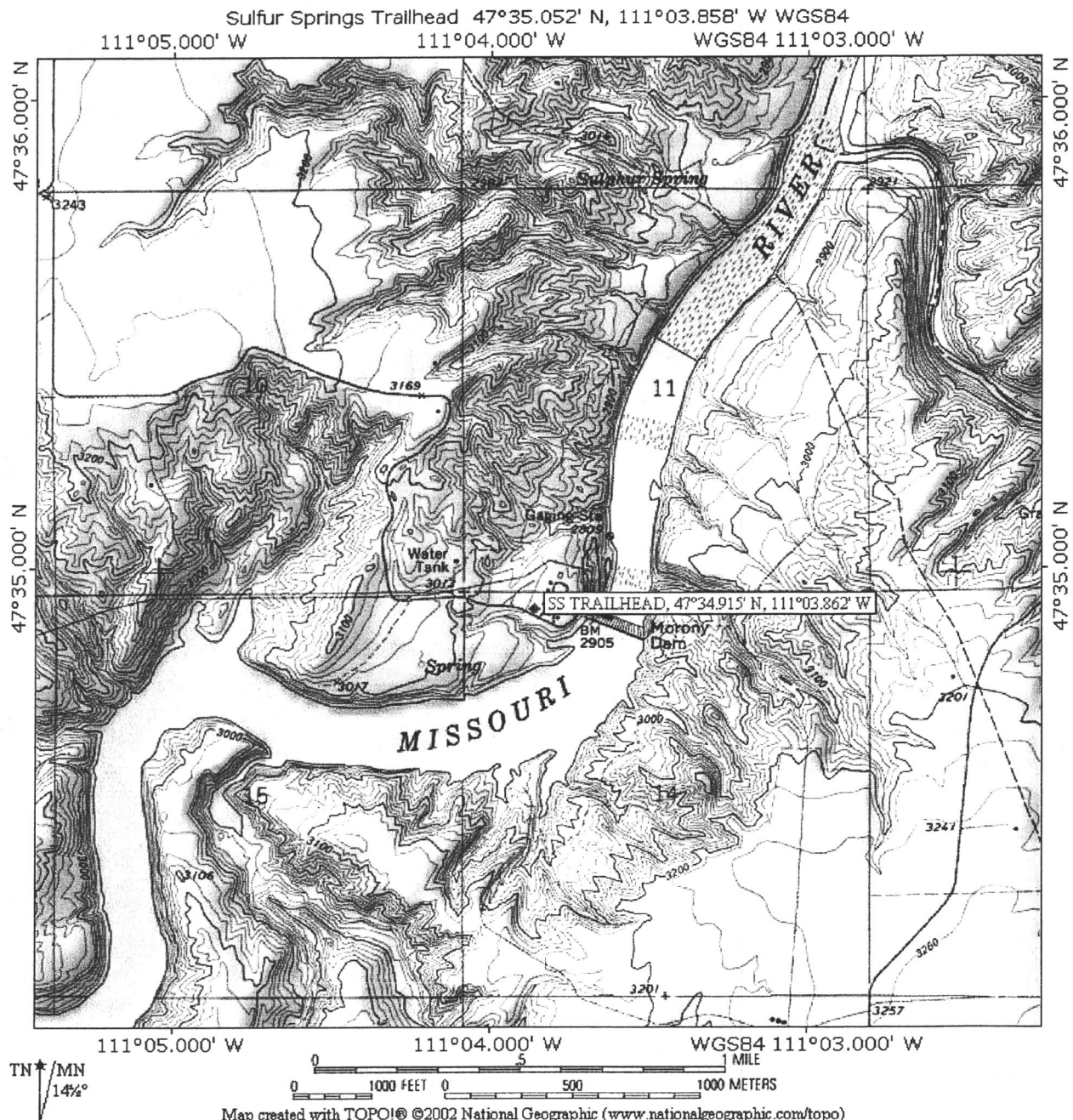
6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)

Cascade County, Sec 14, R5E, T21N

7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	_____
residential	_____		
industrial.....	_____	(e) Productive:	
		irrigated cropland.....	_____
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation.....	_____5_____	drv cropland.....	_____
		forestrv	_____
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	_____	rangeland	_____
		other	_____

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.



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

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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(b) **Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
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PPL-Montana	\$35,000
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(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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USDA Forest Service	Trail Construction
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10. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

This trailhead at Morony will serve as the primary access to the Sulfur Springs portion of the Lewis and Clark Portage National Historic Landmark. The Trailhead consists of a semi-circular parking lot, a CXT Gunnison model pit latrine with windscreen and a multi-use orientation/informational/interpretive kiosk. As part of the project an approximate 900 foot trail will be constructed to a scenic overlook. While this trail segment is not located on FWP property nor will construction use FWP funding the segment is included in this environmental analysis. The proposed trailhead would be located on land owned by PPL Montana and Montana FWP. The trailhead would occupy approximately ½ acre of land. Site dimensions are approximately 250 feet in length and 150 feet in width.

The benefits of this trailhead are to provide public access in an environmentally acceptable manner to the Sulfur Springs Trail. Interpretation of the historic and natural features is included in the Forest Service trail leading from the Trailhead to Sulfur Springs. Trail and trailhead development is consistent with anticipated use during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Providing a semi-hardened trailhead and trail will concentrate use on the developed trail and trailhead reducing use of the user-developed trails and parking areas that are scattered around the Morony area.

The Sulfur Spring trail and trailhead is a cooperative effort between the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, USDA Forest Service, PPL-Montana, the USDI National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, and the private Recreational Trails Incorporated.

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

- Region Four Parks Division – Giant Springs State Park,
Dan Smith
Dave Todd
Chris Dantic
Ray Swartz
- Parks Division – Helena,
Tom Reilly
Chas Van Genderen
- Design and Construction Bureau – Helena,
Bardell Mangum
- Lands Unit – Helena,
Debbie Dils

PPL-Montana

Jon Jourdonnais

American Public Land Exchange

Nancy Johnson
Mark Sommer

USDA Forest Service

- Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center
Jane Weber
- Lewis and Clark National Forest Recreation and Lands Groups
Ron Yates,
Allan Tshida

USDI - National Park Service - Heritage Program – Denver CO.

- Tom Keohan
- Bureau of Land Management –Lewistown Field Office,
Clark Whitehead

Recreational Trails Incorporated

Doug Wicks

Great Falls City-County Planning Office

Ben Rangel

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Pete Brown

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				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		x	a.
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				
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):

a. Project construction would result in the long-term compaction of soils at the trailhead, and long-term loss of productivity. This impact would be localized and limited to the trailhead. No soils would be eroded or compacted off-site.

* 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 can not 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.

2. <u>AIR</u> 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			a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
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)		X				
f. Other:		X				

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

a. a. During construction there will be minor short-term impacts to the air quality of the site due to dust and emissions from construction equipment. These impacts will be temporary and minimal. No mitigation is deemed necessary.

- * 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 can not 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.

3. <u>WATER</u> 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				
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)		X				
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)		X				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (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 can not 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.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment
	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		* x	Index a
b. Alteration of a plant community?		x				
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				
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		x				
g. Other:		x				

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

a. There will be minimum displacement of non-native ornamental grasses, shrubs and trees that have been impacted by changes in land management at Morony over the last 9 years. After irrigation was removed in the late 1990's the ornamental trees and shrubs have been slowly dying. Removal of these non-native species for trailhead development is considered a minor impact of this project.

- * 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 can not 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.

** 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> 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				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		x				
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			a
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)		x				
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)		x				
j. Other:		x				

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

a Some disruption to local wildlife may occur during the 2-month construction period due to the noise of construction equipment and presence of constructions crews. This impact would be minor and limited to the trailhead site.

- * 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 can not 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.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> 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			a
b. Exposure of people to serve 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 Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

a. Increased noise levels will result during the construction phase and following trailhead completion due to recreational use increases in the area. These noise levels will be minor and will not require mitigation. Since new regulations to the area will limit discharge of firearms to hunting during the regular hunting season an overall decrease in nuisance noise levels may result.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> 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				
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				
e. Other:		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (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 can not 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.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

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

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

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

- a. Traffic is anticipated to increase in this area due to new public use of the Historic Landmark and surrounding lands. Developing the Trailhead and trail may result in increased road use leading to Morony.

Historically this area has received much more traffic from residential, industrial, and recreational use of the area. This has changed at the Morony Camp as industrial traffic for operation of Morony Dam declined in the mid-1990's. Current use and traffic is much more recreational use, with no residential and reduced industrial use.

- * 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 can not 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.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> 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		yes	a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		x				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		x				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		x				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						b.
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						c.
g. Other:		x				

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

- b. Road use will need to be monitored to determine the effects of recreational use on the existing county road system. State Parks are allocated a small amount of funding to help counties maintain adequate roads primarily served by recreational use at State Parks. This funding source may be available to help Cascade County maintain the Morony Road in serviceable condition.
- c. Capital Funding is provided by PPL-Montana as a requirement of the FERC License 2188 issued in September 2000. Full funding of the project is provided by PPL-Montana. There is currently up to \$110,000 available for development of the trailhead.
- d. On-going operations and Maintenance monies are provided by PPL-Montana and operated by FWP – Parks Division through a Cooperative Management agreement. Pooled dollars for all projects covered under this agreement is estimated at \$61,000 annually. The Sulfur Springs portion of this is identified at \$10,000 annually, as 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 can not 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.

** 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				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				
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)		X				
e. Other:		X				

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

The project will have an overall positive effect due to concentrating recreational use on a single trail system, improve interpretive efforts, and give more of a site presence due to increased visitation and management patrols. Overall quality of the recreational experience will improve.

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				
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)		X				a.
e. Other:		X				

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

a. No identified historic or cultural resources will be impacted by this trailhead project.

- * 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 can not 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. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	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			a.
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				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

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

A: Cumulative effects are consistent with the change in use of the area from residential to recreational. The overall impacts due to this project are low and will result fewer impacts to the natural environment in the long run.

* 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 can not 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 II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, CONTINUED

1. **Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

No Action Alternative:

Pursuing no development options would leave the area suffering under the effects of multiple trailheads, multiple user-developed pathways and incompatible uses. Building and maintaining a semi-hardened trailhead will help mitigate the effects of uncontrolled recreational use patterns that are currently causing issues and problems in natural and cultural resource management.

Project as proposed:

The trailhead and parking area are small enough (0.5 acre) to provide for significant increased use without overwhelming the site. Providing one graveled parking lot for cars and busses with trail access will reduce the number of user developed parking areas along Morony Dam Road. The developed trails are routed to avoid sensitive areas.

Expanded Project to include Morony Visitor Center and Campground.

The Morony area has been suggested as a site for a regional campground and visitor center. At this time FWP has not sufficiently studied the visitor demand for such developments although the Giant Springs Area Park Planning Group did suggest that campground demand may be high enough to warrant this expansion.

The Morony Apartment building has been suggested as a visitor center and conceptual plans to convert the building into a visitor center have been drawn. Funding for such a Center has not been identified. Until such time that funding for capital development and on-going operations and maintenance is obtained this option cannot be further pursued.

Trailhead development will not preclude the future options being discussed for campground and visitor center development.

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

None identified

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The trailhead to Sulfur Springs will provide access to the Lewis and Clark Portage National Historic Landmark. There are no trailhead facilities provided at this site that meet the requirements of the agencies involved. Public interest in Lewis and Clark is at an all time high and is growing. During the Bicentennial Years of 2003- 2006 interest will peak. Now is the opportune time to build a sensitively designed trailhead that will provide public access, concentrate public use at a developed site, and help reduce resource damage.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

With no anticipated public opposition or significant impacts to the environment an EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

- 2. 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 has been involved in this project in variety of ways. From 1992 to 2001 during the FERC 2188 licensing process for operation of the hydroelectric dams along the Missouri River, the Sulfur Springs trailhead was identified as a significant part of the protection, mitigation and enhancement (PM&E) for the license. A full EIS was written to determine if the package of PM&E measures were sufficient to offset the reduction in public access to our waterways. Many public meetings were held to inform the public about the PM&E package.

In 1999 as part of the acceptance of the conservation and trail easement granted to FWP by the Montana Power Company this project was evaluated and considered.

Upon the acceptance of the Morony tracts FWP held scoping meetings to determine the important issues on these lands. Trailhead development was identified as one of the primary needs.

The Giant Springs State Park Area Planning group sponsored additional public meetings as the Morony tracts were incorporated into the Giant Springs State Park area planning process. Campground development and alternative uses for the Morony Apartment were also considered in depth.

The USDA Forest Service performed environmental analysis for the Sulfur Springs Trail in 2002. They referred to the location of the trailhead and the complex partnerships involved.

On-going meetings of the Great Falls Technical and Recreational Advisory groups-established in the FERC 2188 planning process have kept this trailhead development in the public eye.

This level of discussion and public input is deemed appropriate.

3. Duration of comment period, if any.

This EA will have a 30-day comment period starting May 21st and continuing until June 21, 2004. All comments must be postmarked or received before 5:00 pm June 21st, 2004.

Comments may be directed to:

Sulfur Spring Trailhead EA
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls MT 59405

Or may be emailed to: dsmith@state.mt.us

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

Dan Smith
Giant Springs State Park Manager
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls MT 59405
(406) 454-5840