



**Public Draft
Environmental Assessment**

for a

**124 Permit Application from Flathead
County for Boat Ramp Construction on
Church Slough**

February 2010

Public Draft Environmental Assessment MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed state action:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to examine and make a decision on whether or not to grant approval for a Montana Stream Protection Act (SPA 124) permit application submitted by Flathead County for construction of public boat access to Church Slough. The proposed project includes construction of a vehicle turnaround, parking, and installation of a concrete boat launch on county-owned property.

2. Agency authority for the proposed action:

87-5-502. Notice of construction or hydraulic projects. An agency of state government, county, municipality, or other subdivision of the state of Montana, hereafter called applicant, shall not construct, modify, operate, maintain, or fail to maintain any construction project or hydraulic project which may or will obstruct, damage, diminish, destroy, change, modify, or vary the natural existing shape and form of any stream or its banks or tributaries by any type or form of construction without first causing notice of such planned construction to be served upon the department (Fish, Wildlife & Parks) on forms furnished by the department as soon as preliminary plans are completed but not less than 60 days prior to commencement of final plans for construction. Such notice shall include detailed plans and specifications of so much of said project as may or will affect any such stream in any manner specified above.

87-5-503. Investigation of construction plans. The department shall promptly examine and investigate all such plans. Should the department determine the plans and specifications furnished with any such application technically insufficient, the department shall so notify the applicant and may render aid in preparing adequate plans and specifications.

87-5-504. Notice of department findings and alternative plans. Within 30 days after the receipt of such plans, the department shall notify the applicant whether or not such construction project or hydraulic project will adversely affect any fish or game habitat. If the department notifies the applicant that such construction will adversely affect any fish or game habitat, it shall accompany such notice with recommendations or alternative plans which will eliminate or diminish such adverse effect.

3. Name of project:

Flathead County Church Slough Boat Ramp Project

4. Project sponsor:

Flathead County Parks Department
309 FFA Drive
Kalispell, MT 59901
758-5800

5. Anticipated schedule:

Estimated construction commencement date: Winter 2010

Estimated completion date: Winter 2010

Current status of project design (% complete): 100%

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

Flathead County, Range 20W, Township 28N, Section 31. At the back of this document are maps describing the location of the proposed action.

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

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u><1</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
(existing shop area)		Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/	<u>1</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
Woodlands/Recreation		Forestry	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	<u><1</u>	Rangeland	<u>0</u>
Areas		Other	<u>0</u>

8. Listing of any other local, state, or federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction:

(a) Permits (Permits will be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.):

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permits</u>
US Army Corps of Engineers	Federal Clean Water Act 404 Permit
Flathead County Development Office	Floodplain construction permit
Department of Water Quality	318 Permit for short-term exemption for turbidity

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Flathead County	NA
Flathead Chapter Walleyes Unlimited	\$12,000

(c) Other overlapping or additional jurisdictional responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
US Army Corps of Engineers	
Flathead County Floodplain Office	

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

Flathead County provided FWP a Stream Protection Act 124 Permit application that included a written description and drawings of the proposed construction.

Flathead County proposes to construct a vehicle turnaround, parking, and boat launch on Church Slough to provide safe access to the water body for users and anglers. The proposal will reestablish opportunity for public users to launch boats and safely walk down the bank to the water's edge. There was a small primitive boat access on private property immediately adjacent to the site prior to Flathead County abandonment of the road right of way. The previous site is now closed to public use.

Proposed construction includes a vehicle turnaround, parking, and concrete boat launch. The vehicle turnaround is located on the upper terrace roughly 50 to 60 feet back from the water's edge at the previous location of the county road prism. The 105-foot-long boat ramp would have a 12-foot-wide concrete running surface and extend to a depth three feet below the full pool elevation about 35 feet out from the bank. Roughly 45 feet of linear bank will be disturbed at the top of the bank. An excavator will work from the upper bank. Rock riprap will be placed along the toe of the disturbed bank to reduce future erosion.

The project site has been manipulated over time. The upper terrace was in agricultural production prior to residential subdivision. The immediate upper bank was previously a paved county road. The sloped bank is a combination of exposed rock and primarily grass and shrub vegetation. A few cottonwood trees are on the sloped bank.

FWP will notify the applicant whether or not the proposed construction project will adversely affect fish or wildlife habitat, what modifications are required, and whether or not the project will be permitted.

10. Description of alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

FWP would deny the proposed construction. No Action alternative would leave the site in its current state with limited public boating opportunity and difficult and unsafe pedestrian access to the water's edge. Public users would continue to use the site in the existing condition, including trespassing onto a neighboring property to access the water. This alternative may result in a risk of law suits against Flathead County to replace access that existed prior to abandonment of the road easement.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

FWP would approve proposed construction with or without modifications to reduce impacts to fish and wildlife habitat. Additional mitigation activities may be identified during the review process and be included in the permit to Flathead County and the Record of Decision.

PART II. PREDICTED ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

1. Evaluation of the impacts of Alternative B, 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					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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				
c. Destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?			X			1c.
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		X	1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

1c. The construction site has been previously impacted with road construction and demolition and with agricultural activities. Fill will be placed on the slough bed for the launch ramp, covering an area of roughly 14 by 35 feet. Roughly 45 feet of bank will be impacted by the launch construction.

1d. Bank erosion in the proposed disturbed area will be prevented by placement of rock riprap. No modification of the slough channel associated with siltation, deposition, or erosion is expected. This proposal is similar in level of disturbance to three permits issued by the Flathead County Conservation District in the last two years to private landowners adjacent to the county property. Construction of a public boat ramp on the slough will reduce the need for individual private landowners on the slough to construct boat ramps.

Construction of a boat ramp would be expected to increase boat use. There is concern increased boat use could increase shoreline erosion due to boat wakes. This is a valid concern, but cannot be addressed under this SPA permitting process which has jurisdiction only over construction of the boat ramp. Boat use and regulation would have to be addressed under a boating use petition to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission. Flathead County could also put restrictions on boats launching at the county property.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13c.)		X				
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				

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity?			X		X	3a.
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				

3a. Construction of the launch will disturb the bank and potentially introduce fine materials into the water body. Flathead County proposes mitigation actions to minimize the opportunity for sediment introductions including placing rock riprap along the disturbed bank to reduce erosion, completing construction during the lower lake pool elevations so construction can be done while the site is dry, and the disturbed area will be reseeded following construction. Following the above actions will result in insignificant introductions of fine sediments to Church Slough.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X			4b.
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				4e.
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

4b. The existing vegetation along the approximately 45 feet of bank where the launch will be located will be removed. The toe of the disturbed bank will be stabilized with rock riprap.

4e. Flathead County proposes to reseed any disturbed areas with weed-free grass seed.

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

5a, b, c. The slough provides habitat for fish and wildlife species. Disturbances during construction and project completion will not directly negatively impact fish and wildlife habitat, with the exception of minor impacts due to loss of 45 feet of bank vegetation in the disturbed area. The proposal should not impact the diversity of fish and wildlife species currently using the slough.

Establishing a public boat launch will not create new uses, but could lead to an increase in boating use. The slough is currently used by boaters that own property on the slough, get permission for access from property owners on the slough, or enter the slough from the Flathead River, where there are both private and public boating accesses. An FWP boating survey in 2008 found that boat use levels have increased in the Flathead River and sloughs during the last 16 years, with summer boat numbers doubling since 2002 and quadrupling since 1992. Current boating use has not been determined to effect changes in wildlife use. If current use or increased boating use were determined to be deteriorating critical habitat or wildlife use, boating restrictions could be implemented to reduce impacts through a petition process to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission.

In addition, the boat ramp is to be constructed to only three feet of depth below the summer full pool lake elevation. The ramp will provide access for boat trailers at full pool elevation. Kerr Dam at the south end of Flathead Lake controls the top 10 feet of water elevation on Flathead Lake. The full pool lake level raises the elevation of the Flathead River and Church Slough to the full pool elevation. Full pool elevation is usually reached in early to mid June as Flathead Lake fills during spring runoff. The water elevation drops from full pool in late October as water is released from Kerr Dam. The proposed boat ramp would allow trailer use during the high pool level in the summer and fall months.

5d. Prior to this proposal many legal and illegal introductions of fish species have occurred. This proposal does not increase opportunity for these introductions to occur in the future since boat launching is not

required for introductions and public access already exists to the slough at this site, through private lands and from the river. The boat ramp may increase public boating and boat use on the slough, which would increase the opportunity for introductions of other nuisance species including plants and small aquatic organisms into the slough. This opportunity currently exists since boat owners can launch their boats through private property on the slough or enter the slough from the Flathead River.

5f. There are no species listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) at the site. Bull trout are listed as threatened under ESA and individuals seasonally use the slough. During cooler months, the colder water temperatures allow bull trout to use the slough habitat. During an angler creel survey in 2002, a few bull trout were caught in the sloughs along the Flathead River with low bull trout numbers caught in April, May, September, and February. There is no spawning habitat for bull trout in the slough. If the ramp increases boating use in summer months, bull trout will not be impacted since bull trout will not be in the slough at this time due to warm water temperatures. Current fishing regulations do not allow angler harvest of bull trout or intentionally fishing for bull trout. Grizzly bears are also listed as threatened under the ESA. Grizzly bears use the Flathead River corridor including riparian habitat along sloughs. Although the construction site does not provide grizzly bear habitat, other properties along the slough could. It is not expected that any potential additional boat use associated with this proposal would impact grizzly bear use of the surrounding areas.

Westslope cutthroat trout are considered a sensitive species in Montana. Similar to the bull trout use levels, westslope cutthroat trout also infrequently use the slough during cooler months. In the 2002 angler creel survey, we observed low catch of cutthroat trout only in September in sloughs along the Flathead River. Current fishing regulations for cutthroat include catch and release in the Flathead River and harvest of three daily and in possession in the sloughs. Other unique wildlife species that use the slough include bald eagles, migrating waterfowl, and river otters. Ice cover and low pool elevations will result in limited boating use of the proposed ramp in winter and spring. The slough is currently open to waterfowl hunting in fall months. The proposed site may increase waterfowl hunter access to the slough during fall months prior to ice formation. Church Slough is an important resting area for migrating waterfowl in early spring when open waters are limited. Upwards of 100,000 waterfowl utilize Church Slough during the months of April. If use of the ramp increases prior to full pool levels, an opening date for boat use could be considered to mitigate impacts. The lake is near low pool level at the end of April, and the proposed ramp will be at an elevation of about seven vertical feet above the water level. Migrating waterfowl should not be impacted by the ramp proposal since the ramp would be above the water level in spring making it unusable to boaters when waterfowl are migrating. Ice cover could also limit boat use at this time of year. If the proposal increases boating use and leads to unacceptable disturbance of fish or wildlife species, boating, fishing, and hunting regulations could be implemented to mitigate impacts.

5g. If the proposal increases boating use and leads to unacceptable disturbance of fish or wildlife species, boating, fishing, and hunting regulations could be implemented to mitigate impacts.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		X	6a & b.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		X	6a & b.
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				

6a & b. Boat ramp construction could lead to an increase in existing uses. Motorboats and private watercraft, which originate from private property or from the Flathead River, are currently used on Church Slough. Providing a public launch could increase boater numbers leading to increased noise levels. If use increases to unacceptable levels, boating regulations could be implemented to reduce noise levels through a petition process through the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission. Flathead County could also put restrictions on boats launching at the county property. Montana boating laws currently contain limits to noise levels from watercraft. Motorboats and PWC may not emit noise in excess of 86 decibels measured at a distance of 50 feet. At idle speed, exhaust noise may not be in excess of 90 decibels measured one meter from the muffler.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflict 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			7d.
e. Other:		X				

7d. The site is currently open to year-round use. However, a boat ramp could increase use to the site and disturbance to adjacent home sites. Flathead County access sites currently have night closures from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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			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				
d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

8a. Presence of a boat ramp could increase the risk of spill of gasoline or motor oil from a boat. Private watercraft typically carry small amounts of both substances.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPAC					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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			9e.
f. Other:		X				

9e. Construction of a boat ramp would be expected to cause a minor increase in use of the first ½ mile of Wagner Lane and on Lower Valley Road by vehicles pulling boats on trailers.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. 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. An effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. 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. An increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. Define projected revenue sources		X				
f. Define projected maintenance costs.		X				
g. Other:		X				

10a. If construction of the turnaround and boat ramp results in increased public use during summer months, the county may incur increased maintenance costs. The proposal will not create new need for governmental services at this site. The public access currently exists and will continue, which will result in future maintenance costs regardless of whether or not the proposed project is constructed.

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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			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.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

11c. Construction of a boat ramp could restore some boating use lost when the Wagner Lane right of way was abandoned. Public use can now only occur by boating up or down the Flathead River to Church Slough. Increased use could lead to reduced quality for users who desire lower use conditions. Construction of a boat ramp would allow for safer access to Church Slough during winter ice-fishing.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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 12a.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
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		X	13a.
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.)		X				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

13a. This environmental assessment can only review the impacts associated with boat ramp construction. A number of minor impacts were discussed in the above sections; all potential impacts were associated with the potential to increase boating use in summer and fall months. No new uses were identified with this proposal. If boating use increases and if the increase leads to unacceptable impacts, these impacts could be mitigated by implementing additional boating regulations in the slough through a petition process to the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission. Flathead County could also put restrictions on boats launching at the county property.

13e. Individuals or groups who are concerned with the potential to increase boat use on the slough could oppose an FWP decision to permit the county boat ramp proposal. Likely, there will be some concerns regarding the potential for increased boat or site use. Conversely, there will likely also be concerns expressed by individuals or groups who would oppose an FWP decision to not permit the proposed construction. These people would be supportive of increasing public boating access to the slough.

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

FWP and other regulatory agencies can require additional mitigation actions to protect water quality during construction activities. FWP regulates recreational boating and could implement boating regulations on the slough that would mitigate impacts associated with a potential increase in boating. FWP regulates fishing and hunting and could change regulations if increased use levels impacted fish and wildlife populations.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. Minor impacts were associated with the potential to increase boating use of the slough during summer and fall months. As needed in the future, boating regulations would mitigate identified minor impacts.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public Involvement:

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

- Two public notices in each of these papers: Daily Inter Lake and Flathead Beacon
- One statewide press release
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web site: <http://fwp.mt.gov>

Copies of this EA will be distributed upon request to interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope, having limited impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

2. Duration of comment period.

The draft is out for a 30-day public review through 5:00 p.m., Thursday, March 25, 2010. A public meeting will be held on Thursday, March 18, from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the FWP headquarters office, 490 N Meridian Road, Kalispell, in the large conference room. Comments can be mailed to the address below:

Church Slough Boat Ramp EA
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

Or e-mailed to mdeleray@mt.gov.

PART V. EA PREPARATION

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

No.

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

The proposed action is FWP providing Flathead County a permit to construct a boat ramp on county property. Permitting proposals of other agencies is a regular activity of FWP. The project area is small and proposed work similar to other projects previously permitted on Church Slough.

- 2. Person responsible for preparing the EA:**

Mark Deleray, Fisheries Biologist
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
406-751-4543

- 3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Enforcement Division
Parks Division
Wildlife Division
Design & Construction Bureau
Legal Bureau
Flathead County Parks and Recreation



Figure 1. The proposed project is located on Church Slough (T28N, R21W, S36). The county access site is located on Wagner Lane, north of the intersection with Lower Valley Road.



Figure 2. Proposed project site is located in the center of the photo (note the lot with the long, narrow access to Wagner Lane).