

MEPA ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY FORM

Project Name: Ruby River State Water Project – Ruby Dam Fishing Access Site Lease Agreement

Proposed Implementation Date: July 2022

Proponent: Montana DNRC – State Water Projects Bureau

Type and Purpose of Action:

The Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) currently administers a recreational Lease to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (DFWP) for the Ruby Dam Fishing Access Site (FAS), near Alder, MT in Madison County. The Ruby Dam FAS serves as a public recreation opportunity on Project Lands owned by DNRC as part of the Ruby River State Water Project. The current Lease expires on August 15, 2022. The action alternative provides a new Lease Agreement to DFWP for the Ruby Dam FAS for a ten-year term.

Future development or improvements to the Ruby Dam FAS by DNRC or their Lessee will require a separate environmental analysis, independent of this MEPA environmental assessment.

Location: Section 8, T7S, R4W

County: Madison

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION
<p>1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief summary of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.</p>	<p>A scoping meeting was held on 6/15/2022 to discuss Lease terms and conditions and Lease boundary extents. Groups/agencies involved and/or contacted include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks • Ruby River Water Users Association
<p>2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:</p>	<p>The project is located on public land administered by Montana DNRC. No other government agencies have jurisdiction. No permits are needed for any alternative considered.</p>
<p>3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Proceed with a Lease Agreement with DFWP. No Action Alternative: Do not proceed with a Lease Agreement with DFWP. The no action alternative will result in DFWP removing their public recreation owned infrastructure.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:</p> <p>Are fragile, compatible or unstable soils present?</p> <p>Are there unusual geologic features?</p> <p>Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact the geology and soil quality, stability and moisture.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will have a minor disturbance to surrounding soils. Reclamation of soil disturbance will occur based on current Lease terms and conditions.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:</p> <p>Are important surface or groundwater resources present?</p> <p>Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact water quality, quantity and distribution.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect water quality, quantity and distribution.</p>
<p>6. AIR QUALITY:</p> <p>Will pollutants or particulate be produced?</p> <p>Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I air shed)?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not affect air quality.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect air quality.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</p> <p>Will vegetative communities be permanently altered?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not affect vegetation cover, quantity and quality.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will have a minor disturbance to vegetation cover due to heavy equipment operations. Reclamation of vegetation establishment will occur based on current Lease terms and conditions.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:</p> <p>Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats.</p>

<p>9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</p> <p>Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present?</p> <p>Any wetlands?</p> <p>Any sensitive species or Species of Special Concern?</p>	<p>The project is in an area listed as habitat for the following State Species of Special Concern:</p> <p>Fauna: Grizzly Bear, Hoary Bat, Little Brown Myotis, Long-eared Myotis, Pygmy Rabbit, Wolverine, American White Pelican, Black Tern, Black-necked Stilt, Brewer's Sparrow, Clark's Grebe, Clark's Nutcracker, Common Loon, Golden Eagle, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Great Blue Heron, Grater Sage-Grouse, Green-tailed Towhee, Long-billed Curlew, Northern Goshawk, Western Toad, and Westslope Cutthroat Trout. The Grizzly Bear is also listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).</p> <p>Flora State Species of Special Concern: Beaked Spikerush, Beardless Wildrye, Parry's Fleabane, Taper-tip Desert-parsley, Foxtail Muhly, and Mealy Primrose.</p> <p>There are no wetlands on the project site.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact environmental resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect environmental resources.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL / ARCHAEOLOGICAL :</p> <p>Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not affect any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.</p>
<p>11. AESTHETICS:</p> <p>Is the project on a prominent topographic feature?</p> <p>Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas?</p> <p>Will there be excessive noise or light?</p>	<p>The project location and access is located on public land. The site is visible from Route 357.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not affect aesthetics.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will slightly improve scenic characteristics of the area.</p>

<p>12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:</p> <p>Will the project use resources that are limited in the area?</p> <p>Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact demands on environmental resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect environmental resources.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:</p> <p>Are there other studies, plans or projects on this site?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact any other studies or plans.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect any other studies or plans.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

<p>14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</p> <p>Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will maintain human health and safety by the continuation of sanitary facilities.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will affect human health and safety by removal of sanitary facilities. The public will have to find an alternative location for these services.</p>
<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</p> <p>Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>The project is on private land, with the flume and associated canal right-of-way managed for the delivery of irrigation water.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities.</p>

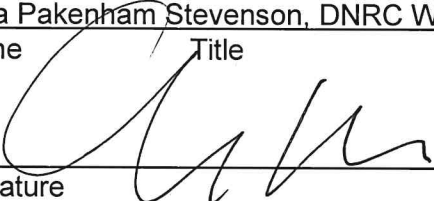
<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</p> <p>Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not affect employment.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure may require the hiring of a local contractor. This work will only be temporary and could be completed in 1 day.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</p> <p>Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact the local and state tax base or revenues.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect local and state tax base or revenues.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:</p> <p>Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads?</p> <p>Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will maintain the public fishing access site. DFWP will continue to allocate governmental services and resources for general maintenance of the site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure eliminate the demand for governmental services for recreational maintenance of the site.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:</p> <p>Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact environmental plans or goals.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect environmental plans or goals.</p>
<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:</p> <p>Is wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through the project location?</p> <p>Is there recreational potential within the project location?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The administrative Lease renewal supports continued use of the public fishing access site and recreational opportunities with access to the Ruby River.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure and recreational management lease termination will reduce the quality of the public's recreation experience by removing sanitary facilities.</p>

<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</p> <p>Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact housing or population density and distribution.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect housing or population density and distribution.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:</p> <p>Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact social structures and mores.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect social structures and mores.</p>
<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:</p> <p>Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will not impact cultural uniqueness and diversity.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure will not affect cultural uniqueness and diversity.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This administrative Lease Agreement will maintain social and economic conditions.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Removal of DFWP infrastructure and recreational management lease termination may have a minor effect on the local economy as visitation to the site may be reduced due to lack of facilities.</p>

IV. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action alternative.
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	There are no significant or cumulative impacts anticipated with the action alternative.
27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Prepared By: Mark McNearney, P.E., DNRC-SWPB Date: 07/5/2022
Name Title

EA Approved By: Anna Pakenham Stevenson, DNRC Water Resources Division Administrator
Name Title
 7/6/22 Date:
Signature

Attachments: Site Map.

Additional Information:

This EA will be published for 30 days on the DNRC website at:

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/public-interest/environmental-docs>

Questions and comments should be directed to:

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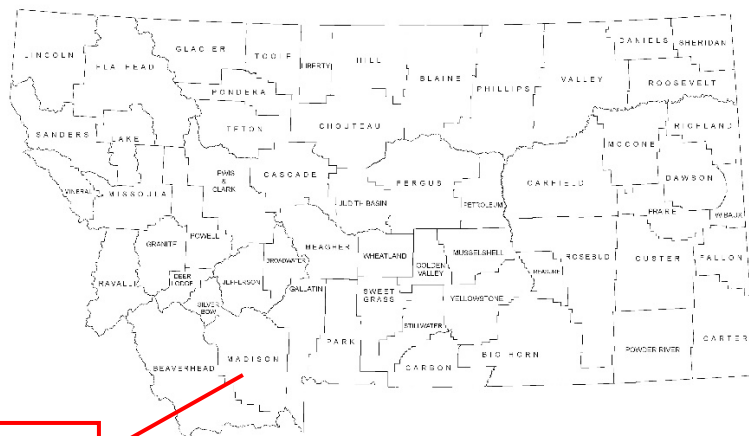
Thank you for your interest.

SITE MAP

Ruby River Dam and Fishing Access Site



VICINITY MAP



Ruby Dam FAS

