



# **Draft Environmental Assessment: Bonner Learning Park Property Donation to Milltown State Park**

**November 2018**



**Region 2  
3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula, MT 59804**

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

**PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

**1. Type of proposed state action:**

Montana State Parks (MSP), a Division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), proposes to accept the donation (fee-title acquisition) of an approximately 33.56-acre land parcel immediately adjacent to Milltown State Park along the Clark Fork River in Missoula County. The land, currently owned by Bonner Development Group (BDG) and managed as the Bonner Learning Park (BLP), would be acquired and added to Milltown State Park (MSP). The property, which includes several park amenities has frequently been used by Bonner School teachers and students as an outdoor classroom and continues to be important to the local community. Inclusion of the property in Milltown State Park would provide for continued public access to the site and expand public access to Milltown State Park as a whole.

**2. Agency authority for the proposed action:**

FWP has the authority to acquire land for state parks and outdoor recreation per Montana State Statute §87-1-209 Montana Code Annotated (MCA). FWP also has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per §23-1-101, MCA: “for the purpose of conserving the scenic, historic, archaeological, scientific, and recreational resources of the state and providing their use and enjoyment, thereby contributing to the cultural, recreational, and economic life of the people and their health.”

**3. Name of project:**

Bonner Learning Park Property Donation to Milltown State Park

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

Montana State Parks  
FWP, Region 2  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula MT 59804  
(406) 542-5500

**5. Anticipated Schedule:**

Estimated Donation Date: Winter 2018/19

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

The project area is located near the unincorporated communities of Milltown and Bonner, adjacent to the Clark Fork River, and approximately seven miles east of Missoula along Interstate Highway 90 (I-90) in Missoula County (Section 21 Township 13 North, Range 18 West; Figures 1 and 2).

**Figure 1: Location map of the project area**



**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>14</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
(b) Open Space/ Woodlands/Recreation	<u>16</u>	Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u>4</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
		Forestry	<u>0</u>
		Rangeland	<u>0</u>
		Other	<u>0</u>

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

(a) **Permits:**

Agency Name	Permits
None	N/A



**(b) Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Bonner Development Group	
-Improvements associated with railroad access agreement	\$75,000
Montana State Parks	
-Improvements associated with railroad access agreement	\$25,000
-Initial work to open the site to the public (kiosk, fencing, etc.)	~\$10,000
Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP)	
-Funding granted to MSP from NRDP would be utilized for operations and maintenance activities on the BLP parcel in addition to existing Milltown State Park operations and maintenance needs.	

**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
MT Department of Transportation	Access under I-90 Bridges
BNSF/MRL Railroads	Access to parking area and under Railroad

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

The Bonner Learning Park (BLP) is an approximately 33.56-acre inholding property located along the north shore of the Clark Fork River (upstream of its confluence with the Blackfoot River), adjacent to Milltown State Park on both its upstream and downstream boundaries. Most of the property is located on the north side of the river channel with a portion of the southwest corner extending across the current river channel. The BLP also shares a property boundary with the Clark Fork Arena, an 11-acre privately owned riding arena and associated facilities frequently used for a variety of equestrian activities (See Figure 2).

The BLP was initially developed in the mid-1990s by Bonner Development Group (BDG), following its acquisition of the property from Champion International. The site served as a small community park until 2006 when it closed with the advent of the Milltown Superfund cleanup construction work. Cleanup work has since been completed, but the BLP has remained closed to the public while site revegetation efforts meet performance standards, which were met in 2016.

In previous years, BDG had worked with the Bonner School, which is located within walking distance of the BLP, to explore the potential of transferring the BLP to the school. Transferring the Property is not a viable option, and in the spring of 2016 Montana State Parks was approached as a potential owner for the property. In June 2016, the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board (Board) gave the Parks Division its tentative endorsement to explore acquisition of the BLP. In April 2018, an information item was presented to the Board to provide an update on the status of the project.

The developed MSP confluence area is accessed from Tamarack Lane to Juniper Lane, off Highway 10E in Milltown and is along the north shore of the Clark Fork River near its confluence with the Blackfoot River. Currently, there is limited public access to the portion of MSP along the north shore Clark Fork River that is *upstream* of the Blackfoot River confluence. This is because there is private property—the BNSF/MRL rail line and/or other small private properties—between Highway 10E and MSP property.

The purpose of the acquisition would be twofold: to enable legal public access to that portion of Milltown State Park located along the north bank of the Clark Fork River upstream of its confluence with the Blackfoot River and to enhance recreational and educational opportunities at the park. Accepting the donation of the BLP property for inclusion in Milltown State Park would provide access to this northern portion of the Milltown State Park along the Clark Fork upstream of the Blackfoot River confluence and provide nearly contiguous ownership on the north side of the river to connect the existing upstream and downstream Milltown State Park boundaries.

Public parking would be provided at an existing parking lot on Burlington Northern Santa Fee/Montana Rail Link (BNSF/MRL) property, with walk-in only public access permitted under the rail line. Parking and access under the rail line is contingent on developing an access agreement between BNSF/MRL and FWP. Motorized vehicle access under the rail line would be granted only for administrative purposes (e.g., law enforcement, site maintenance, etc.). Construction of an overhead catchment structure, fencing and potential modification or expansion of the existing parking area on BNSF/MRL property will be part of upcoming access agreement conversations. Potential impacts from these construction activities are being assessed within the scope of this EA.

The BLP has several amenities on-site that would provide immediate opportunity for public recreational use. Current BLP site developments include: train cabooses, stone and timber-framed picnic shelter with built-in grill, vault toilet, kiosk, sundial, built-in spotting scope for nature viewing and short trail network. An administrative access road that passes from Highway 10E through the BLP property and leads to state park property at the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot rivers would also open possibilities for non-motorized public access along the north bank of the Clark Fork River.

The BLP property is just a short walk from the Bonner School and has facilities that can support educational opportunities and field trips. In 2016, more than 1,100 students, from first grade through graduate school, made visits to Milltown State Park. Acquisition of the BLP would further enhance Milltown State Park's stature as an educational destination.

Figure 2: Milltown State Park, donation parcel and parking and access boundaries



**10. 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:**

**Alternative A: No Action**

If no action is taken, FWP would not accept the donation of Bonner Learning Park and associated amenities, and the property would not be added to Milltown State Park. BDG may retain the property or seek a new owner(s). The recreational and educational opportunities afforded by this addition to Milltown State Park would go unrealized, and there would be limited public access to the north bank of the Clark Fork River (upstream of the Blackfoot River confluence) at Milltown State Park.

**Alternative B (Proposed Action): Accept Donation (Fee-title Acquisition) of the approximately 33.56-acre BDG Property.**

Under this alternative, FWP would accept the donation of Bonner Learning Park and associated amenities, and FWP would complete all required process steps to add the property to Milltown State Park. Construction of an overhead catchment structure, fencing and potential modification or expansion of the existing parking area on BNSF/MRL property would be completed in accordance with access agreement terms. Overall recreation and educational opportunities at MSP would be enhanced, and legal public access to MSP's north bank of the Clark Fork River upstream of the Blackfoot River confluence provided for the public.

**PART II. 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. <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				
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				

\* 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.



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 13 (c).)			X			2a
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):**

2a. Air quality could be impacted temporarily during construction activities related to the BNSF/MRL – FWP access agreement.. These impacts would be minor and short-lived.

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\*\* 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 *					
	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				
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 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.

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				
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 Vegetation (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.

<b>** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
<b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>						
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				
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 Positive			2j.

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife:**

2j. This parcel contains a few floodplain pools and ponds that are important habitat for a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds including a handful of other Montana SOC (mostly tier 2 and 3 species). Additionally, disconnected floodplain pools and ponds are very important for amphibian breeding habitat.

\* 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.



**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				
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):**

- \* 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.

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. 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 Use (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.

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				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?			X		Yes	8b
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)		X				
e. Other:		X				

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

- 8b. Montana State Parks works closely with Missoula County and local emergency responders and would include this parcel as part of the Milltown State Park emergency response plan.
- 8c. A catchment structure and fencing will be constructed to prevent public passage onto the active rail line and prevent falling material and debris from becoming an overhead hazard.

\* 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.

<b>9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u></b> <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
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 Positive			9b
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		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):**

- 9b. Inclusion of the Bonner Learning Park in Milltown State Park could enhance the social structure of nearby local communities such as Bonner, Milltown and Piltzville through new access, recreation and educational opportunities for local citizens.
- e. Public parking and access to and through the parcel (and therefore, the park) could increase traffic flow. Montana State Parks prioritizes public safety in park development and management and will incorporate traffic hazard mitigation in those efforts.

\* 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.



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. 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	10a
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 use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources			X			10e
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.			X			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. Development of Milltown State Park requires maintenance and management associated with public access and recreation at the park. Maintenance and management needs associated with the proposed acquisition would be incorporated with those of Milltown State Park overall, for a slight increase in service costs and effort. Additionally, Montana State Parks would continue to coordinate with other partners such as Missoula County, local law enforcement and Rural Fire to address other concerns that may emerge relative to this project.
- 10f. Special uses, commercial uses, shelter rental and public use of the caboose could all provide potential revenue sources.
- 10f. Future costs for road maintenance, weed management and other associated maintenance in the project area would be incorporated in existing operating budgets. Currently, operational budgets for Milltown State Park are provided through Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) granted funds. Conversations with NRDP have indicated that, if acquired, existing funds used to manage Milltown State Park could also be used in managing the BLP property.

\* 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).

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

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

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

11c. The addition of the Bonner Learning Park to Milltown State Park would likely enhance the quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities (See Tourism Report; Appendix B).

11e Depending on the nature of access agreed to between MRL/BNSF and FWP, moving the shelter or caboose to a location elsewhere within Milltown State Park may be considered if necessary to better facilitate public use of these amenities.

\* 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. <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 12.a.)			X Positive		Yes	12d
e. Other:		X				

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

12d. Acquisition of the proposed parcel would be expected to both preserve and enhance the cultural and historic character of the larger area including and surrounding Milltown Sate Park. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted about the proposed project and SHPO deferred cultural resource concerns to the Montana State Parks Heritage Program Manager. SHPO's assessment was that given the parcel's location near the confluence of two rivers with various attributes of cultural significance, that a cultural resource evaluation in compliance with the Montana Antiquities Act (22-3-421 to 22-3-442) and with FWP's ARM rules (12.8.501 to 12.8.10) would be conducted once the parcel is acquired and prior to any 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.

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

<b>13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>  <b>Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>					
	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				
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 Significance Criteria (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.
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- \*\*\* 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**

The proposed action is not expected to have negative cumulative impacts on the physical and/or human environments. The impacts identified in the previous section are either minor or positive in nature and should have no lasting negative effects in relation to this project.

### **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 in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two legal notices in each of these newspapers: *Missoulian*, and *Independent Record* (Helena).
- One statewide press release
- Posting the EA on the Montana State Parks webpage - [www.stateparks.mt.gov](http://www.stateparks.mt.gov) (under “Public Notices”)
- A copy of the EA will be placed at Region 2 FWP Headquarters for review during the comment period.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to neighboring landowners and interested parties (individuals, groups, agencies) to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project and opportunity for comment.

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

- 2. Duration of comment period, if any.**

The public comment period for this EA will extend for 30 days following the publication of the second legal notice in the *Missoulian*. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 pm on December 2, 2018 and can be emailed to [MilltownEA@mt.gov](mailto:MilltownEA@mt.gov) or mailed to the address below:

Montana State Parks  
ATTN: Milltown EA  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804

Or submitted through the website <http://www.stateparks.mt.gov>– click on “Public Notices.”

### **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.**

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), this environmental review revealed no

significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis in determining the significance of impacts.

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

Michael Kustudia  
Milltown State Park Manager  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
(406) 542-5500

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

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Parks Division  
Fisheries Division  
Wildlife Division  
Design & Construction Bureau  
Lands Unit  
Legal Unit  
Responsive Management Unit  
Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP)  
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism

**APPENDICES**

- A. Project Qualification Checklist
- B. Tourism Report
- C. Threatened and Endangered Species List

**APPENDIX A**  
**23-1-110 MCA**  
**PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST**

**Date:** October 2018

**Person Reviewing:** Michael Kustudia

**Project Location:** Adjacent Milltown State Park along the north bank of the Clark Fork River.

**Description of Proposed Work:** Bonner Learning Park Acquisition at Milltown State Park

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check  all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?  
Comments: N/A
- B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?  
Comments: N/A
- C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?  
Comments: N/A
- D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?  
Comments: *Expansion of the existing parking lot could occur but would be contingent on FWP developing and completing an access agreement with MRL/BNSF.*
- E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?  
Comments: N/A
- F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?  
Comments: N/A
- G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?  
Comments: N/A
- H. Any new above ground utility lines?  
Comments: N/A
- I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of

campsites?

Comments: N/A

- [ X ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?

Comments: *The proposed acquisition would provide additional public access to Milltown State Park.*

If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

**APPENDIX B**  
**TOURISM REPORT**

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Jennifer Pelej, Interim Division Administrator  
Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development  
301 S. Park Ave.  
Helena, MT 59601

**Project Name:** Bonner Learning Park Acquisition at Milltown State Park

**Project Description:** Montana State Parks (MSP), a Division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), proposes to accept the donation (fee-title acquisition) of an approximately 34-acre property immediately adjacent to Milltown State Park on the floodplain of the Clark Fork River in Missoula County. The land, currently owned by Bonner Development Group (BDG) and managed as the Bonner Learning Park, would be acquired and added to Milltown State Park. The property includes river frontage, several park amenities and serves as a critical piece of the historic and cultural character of the larger area including and surrounding Milltown State Park.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?  
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:  
Yes, as described, this project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?  
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:  
Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

Signature  Date 10-12-18

## APPENDIX C

### List of Threatened and Endangered animal Species and Species of Concern

Common name <i>Species</i>	Status*	Habitat	Status in Vicinity of Parcels
<b><u>Species of Concern</u></b>			
Bull Trout <i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	Threatened, SOC, Tier 1	Mountain streams, rivers, and lakes	Uses the Blackfoot River and Clark Fork River as a migratory corridor.
Westslope Cutthroat Trout <i>(Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi)</i>	Sensitive, SOC, Tier 1	Coldwater streams	Uses the Blackfoot River and Clark Fork River as a migratory corridor.
Canada Lynx <i>(Lynx Canadensis)</i>	Threatened, SOC Tier 1	Subalpine conifer forests	The area has low quality lynx habitat.
Fisher <i>(Martes pennant)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Mixed conifer forest	The area has low quality fisher habitat.
Hoary Bat <i>(Lasiurus cinereus)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Conifer and riparian forests	Suitable habitat, no surveys have been done to document presence/absence.
Wolverine <i>(Gulo gulo)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Conifer forests	The area has low quality wolverine habitat. Potential movement area, not verified.
Bald Eagle <i>(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)</i>	Delisted, no longer SOC, Tier 1. Special management requirements under Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	Riparian and conifer forests along rivers and lakes	Current nest sites located over 1 mile from project area, no impacts expected from proposed action
Clark's Nutcracker <i>(Nucifraga Columbiana)</i>	SOC, Tier 3	Conifer forests	Birds occasionally move through the Confluence Area.
Flammulated Owl <i>(Otus flammeolus)</i>	SOC, Tier 1	Low-mid elevation conifer forests with large trees	No suitable habitat in the project area.
Great Blue Heron <i>(Ardea Herodias)</i>	SOC, Tier 3	Riparian woodlands	Rookery located at the upper end of the former Milltown Reservoir, over a mile from the Confluence Area. No anticipated impacts on foraging or nesting areas.
Northern Goshawk <i>(Accipiter gentilis)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Mixed conifer forests	No nesting habitat in the project area, no impacts expected.
Pileated Woodpecker <i>(Dryocopus pileatus)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Moist conifer forests	No nesting habitat in the project area, no impacts expected.
Peregrine Falcon <i>(Falco peregrinus)</i>	Delisted, SOC, Tier 2	Cliffs, forages over riparian, wetland habitats	Nesting area located up the Blackfoot, no impacts expected expected.
Veery <i>(Catharus fuscescens)</i>	SOC, Tier 2-3	Riparian forests, shrubby habitats	Documented using riparian shrub habitat in the Milltown Reservoir area. No habitat in the project area.
Pacific Wren <i>(Troglodytes pacificus)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Moist conifer forests	No habitat in the project area.
Western Skink <i>(Eumeces skiltonianus)</i>	SOC, Tier 2	Rock outcrops	Suitable habitat, not verified.
Western Toad	SOC, Tier 2	Wetlands, lakes,	Verified in the Turah area; may use

<b>Common name Species</b>	<b>Status*</b>	<b>Habitat</b>	<b>Status in Vicinity of Parcels</b>
( <i>Bufo boreas</i> )		floodplain pools	uplands adjacent to Clark Fork and Blackfoot rivers.
A. Millipede ( <i>Adirityla cucullata</i> )	SOC	Dry mixed conifer forest clearings	Unknown status, little habitat in the project area.
A. Millipede ( <i>Austrotyla montani</i> )	SOC	Mixed conifer forests	Unknown status, little habitat in the project area.
A. Millipede ( <i>Corypus cochlearis</i> )	SOC	Mixed conifer forests	Unknown status, little habitat in the project area.
Western Pearlshell ( <i>Margaritifera falcata</i> )	SOC, Tier 2	Mountain streams, rivers	Suitable habitat, observed in area.
<b><u>Potential Species of Concern</u></b>			
Barrow's Goldeneye ( <i>Bucephala islandica</i> )	PSOC, Tier 3	Wetlands	Documented to occur in the area during migration. No expected impacts from the proposed project.
Hooded Merganser ( <i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i> )	PSOC, Tier 2	Rivers and riparian wetlands	Potential breeding habitat in oxbow wetlands along the Clark Fork River upstream of the former dam site. Documented to occur in the area during migration. No expected impacts from the proposed project.
Northern Leopard Frog ( <i>Lithobates pipiens</i> )	SOC, Tier 1	Wetlands, floodplain pools	Potential breeding habitat in ponds and backwaters within parcel under consideration.
An Ice Crawler ( <i>Grylloblatta campodeiformis</i> )	PSOC		Unknown due to its nocturnal habits and activity at temperatures just above freezing.