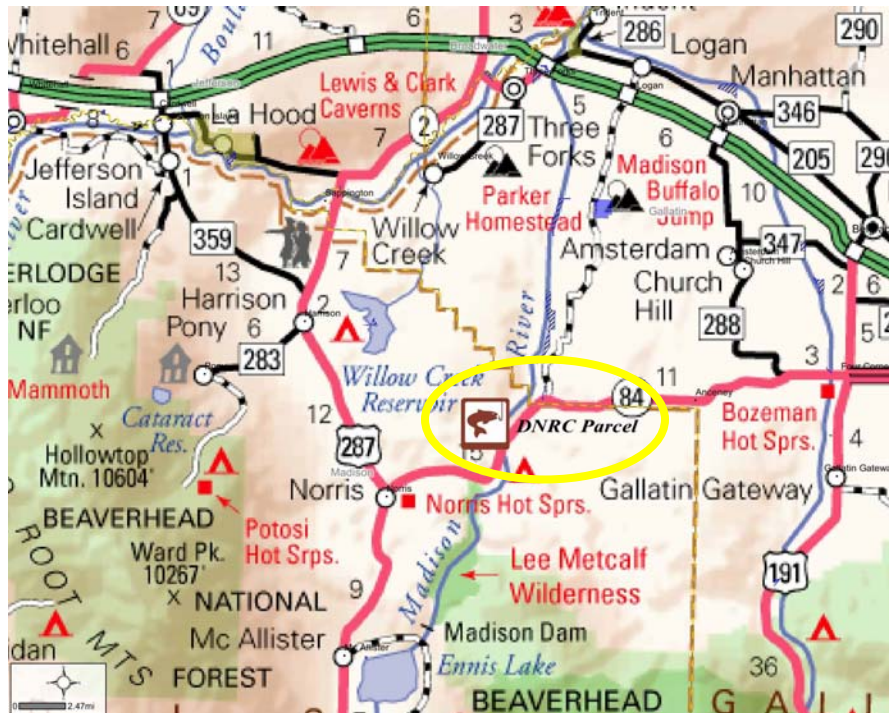


Project Description

Department of Natural Resources & Conservation Cherry Creek Parcel Perpetual Easement Acquisition

This 2008 River Trust Fund grant application seeks to purchase a perpetual easement from DNRC for a 2.25 acre parcel of State School Trust property on the Madison River at the mouth of Cherry Creek. The easement would be acquired by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). FWP and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would enter a management agreement for joint administration, management and maintenance of the site. The site would be managed as a public recreation site to facilitate angling and other recreational activities. A future River Trust Fund grant application would seek to obtain funds for facility development, including signing, entrance road, parking area, latrine and boat ramp.

Location Map



Site Map

2.2 acre DNRC
parcel on Madison
River at mouth of
Cherry Creek.



Scoring Criteria

1. Project involves collaboration with other agencies or organizations. Identify project partners, if any, and describe their participation. Document all funding sources and all in-kind support and services to a project because all are sources of partnerships. If there are no project partners, explain why.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will partner with the federal Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) on this project proposal. DNRC would continue to own the property and would grant a perpetual easement for management of the property to FWP. FWP would enter into a cooperative management agreement with the BLM to jointly manage this property as a public recreation site. FWP will contribute \$20,689.00 towards the cost of the perpetual easement. FWP and BLM will contribute towards continuing management, law enforcement and maintenance costs.

2. Project responds to a clearly identified need. Describe and document the need for this project and how the project would address that need.

This parcel of DNRC School Trust property has accommodated public use for years, without active management. Resource values have been degraded by indiscriminate vehicle use, widespread rock fire ring placement and a pioneered boat ramp that has damaged the riverbank. The surrounding Madison River corridor is under intensive management, mainly by the BLM. Campers seeking to avoid fees at BLM designated campgrounds frequently use this DNRC parcel and evidence of abuse is observable. The acquisition of a perpetual easement by FWP and active management of the site by BLM and FWP will bring management expertise, regularly scheduled maintenance, and law enforcement services to this currently unmanaged parcel.

This site is an important site for staggering floating groups (both commercial and non-commercial) within the Madison River Canyon. This site functions to spread out driftboats and rafts along the Madison River and diminish crowding. The BLM recently received funding to improve the boat ramp facility at the Canaday site, which is upriver from the DNRC parcel, but due to cultural resource issues, the planned improvements have been scaled back and River Trust Fund dollars will be returned to the Fund. The management and development of the DNRC parcel becomes more critical because of these circumstances.

3. Project provides a benefit to public recreation in the Project Area and addresses specific issues and goals of the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan (CRP). Identify how the project provides a benefit to public recreation. Describe how specific issues and goals of the CRP would be supported.

This project would benefit public recreation by engaging the recreation management, maintenance and law enforcement expertise of both FWP and the BLM at this unmanaged parcel. Damaged natural resources will be reclaimed, vehicle use will be restricted to designated roads and parking areas, noxious weed control efforts will be increased, and site regulations regarding fire building and camping will be instituted. The development of appropriate facilities to accommodate public use will be a future action that will further benefit the recreating public.

The acquisition of a perpetual easement for this DNRC parcel on the Madison River would address many of the 2005 CRMP goals, including:

- *To provide safe and well-managed recreation sites and dispersed use areas that provide enjoyable user experiences across a spectrum of opportunities and seasons*
- *To identify and implement management strategies that reduce and/or mitigate conflicts among recreation uses and users and that reduce and/or mitigate conflicts among recreationists and landowner*
- *Continue to improve and expand recreation opportunities that offer universal accessibility*
- *To maintain or proactively increase public safety for recreationists in the Project Area*
- *To promote responsible user behavior that protects natural, cultural, and social resources in the Project Area*

4. *Project is for operation and maintenance of an existing recreation site.* Describe how the project would support O&M needs at an existing recreation site that are over and above day-to-day site maintenance. These additional needs include measures to open a site for public use as well as minor repair; facility upgrade, reconstruction, and replacement; and major site rehabilitation.

This proposal would seek to acquire an easement for a parcel of DNRC property along the Madison River, which has had a long history of public use. The acquisition of this parcel by an agency (FWP) with recreation management experience and capability would indirectly support O & M needs at this site. Acquisition of the property by agencies with O & M capability is the first step in managing this property to meet public recreation needs along the Madison River corridor. Future O & M activities would include active property management, enforcement of site rules and regulations, facility development and site rehabilitation.

5. *Project supports or protects other resources and is consistent with or supports resource plans in the Project Area.* In addition to project-related benefits under #3 above, describe how this project will protect resource values (such as public access, water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources) and support other resource plans, including Project 2188 License plans and land use and land management plans in place in the Corridor.

DNRC's fiduciary responsibility is to generate income for the Montana State School Trust Fund to support education. The DNRC parcel in question has traditionally been used by the public for recreation purposes and to gain access to the Madison River and DNRC is not capable of managing concentrated use. The only option available to DNRC would be to limit use through placement of barriers and vehicle restricting fencing. The revenue generation requirement of DNRC might jeopardize future public use of this property. The acquisition of a perpetual easement to this parcel by FWP will continue to assure public access to the Madison River in this location. Other resource values will continue to be protected by FWP as required by statute.