



March 24, 2016

George Fekaris
Transportation Planner
Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

Re: 2016 Montana Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) – Park County

Dear Mr. Fekaris:

Park County is pleased to submit the 2016 Montana FLAP grant application for review by Western Federal Lands Highway Division. The project funding request is for planning activities associated with Shields River Road (NF-844) which provides access Custer Gallatin National Forest. As per FLAP requirements, Park County is committed to providing the required 13.42% match associated with the overall project budget.

The complete application package is attached for your division to review. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

Clint Tinsley
Chairman

Marty Malone
Commissioner

Steve Caldwell
Commissioner

2016 Montana Federal Lands Access Program

Proposal ID #: MT-FY16-
(For WFL Use Only)

(To be completed jointly by Federal Land Manager and State/County/Local/Tribal Government)

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Project Name | Shields River Road Planning Project | | |
| Route Name/Number | Shields River Road (L-34-1N, L-34-23N) connecting with NF-844 | | |
| Federal Land(s) Accessed (Show on Map) | Custer Gallatin National Forest and State of Montana Trust Lands | | |
| Agency (ies) with Title to Road, Bridge, Trail or Transit System | Park County and Custer Gallatin National Forest (NF-844) | | |
| Agency (ies) with Title to Enhancement Facility | NA | | |
| Agency (ies) with Maintenance Responsibility for Road, Bridge, Trail or Transit System | Shields River Road is vested in Park County and the County is responsible for maintenance of the road from mile post (MP) 0 to MP18.5. | | |
| Agency (ies) with Maintenance Responsibility for Enhancement Facility | Shields River Road is vested in Park County and the County is responsible for maintenance of the road from mile post 0 to MP18.5. | | |
| Type of Proposal | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Improvements <input type="checkbox"/> Enhancement <input type="checkbox"/> Surface Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Research | |
| Key Items of Work (check all that apply) | <input type="checkbox"/> Paving <input type="checkbox"/> Bridges <input type="checkbox"/> Roadside Safety Structures <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Enhancements <input type="checkbox"/> Ancillary Parking Areas, Pullouts/Interpretive Sites <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Earthwork <input type="checkbox"/> Major Culverts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning Study <input type="checkbox"/> Chip Seal | <input type="checkbox"/> Major Concrete Structures <input type="checkbox"/> Road Base or Surface Course <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Transit Facilities or Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Major Drainage Improvements |
| Proposed Work Summary | <p>Park County, Montana wishes to initiate a planning study which would involve the development of a preliminary engineering report (PER) on Shields River Road (SRR) which provides access to NF-844 and various additional CGNF roads. SRR is an asphalt surfaced road that provides primary access for recreational, ranch and residential use that is in disrepair. SRR is a minor collector road that begins at the intersection US Highway 89 North, one-quarter mile north of Wilsall, Montana. The road continues 18.5 miles in a northeast direction, providing access to over 113,000 acres of CGNF. The SRR corridor includes access to private ranches, homes and cabins; amenities such as trailheads, designated and undesignated dispersed campgrounds, mountain lakes; and, access to many creeks and drainages popular for fishing and hunting activities. These features create a diverse travel demographic and a variety of vehicle types utilizing the corridor. Currently SRR is used for access to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreation experiences including bicycling, running and walking; bird and wildlife viewing; hunting, guiding and outfitting; ATV activities; horseback riding and pack trips; fishing, hiking and camping access; and, winter sports including snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. From some SRR camping sites, historic interpretation and trailheads can be accessed.</p> <p>The proposed planning project will include engineering studies, geotechnical analysis and corridor management planning for the rehabilitation of the 18.5-mile SRR. Preliminary work will include scoping, right-of-way (ROW) evaluation, geotechnical investigation, utility analysis, environmental resource and permitting scanning and evaluation of construction alternatives to rehabilitate the roadway through future Federal Lands Access Program proposals or other federal or state funding agency proposals. Future work activities that will likely be included as recommendations in the preliminary</p> | | |

engineering report (PER) will include improvements to the road surface and bridges; roadside safety structures; safety enhancements; ancillary parking areas, pullouts and interpretive sites; earthwork; road base or surface course; and, bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

A map of the proposed planning area and photographs of the area are included as attachments to this application.

Primary Visitor Destinations (Show on Map)

Primary visitor destinations include access to over 113,000 acres of CGNF; two forest service cabins (Crandall Creek and Porcupine Creek); multiple maintained trails leading into the popular Crazy Mountain recreation area; lake; streams; unmaintained hiking areas located within CGNF; Montana State Trust lands; 12 vacation-rental-by-owner facilities; eight designated campsites; over thirty undesignated dispersed campsites; and, nine designated ATV routes. A map of the project area has been included as an attachment to this application.

High Use Federal Recreation Sites and/or Federal Economic Generators (Show on Map)

The planning area provides for a multitude of both developed and dispersed recreation opportunities. According to the Park County GIS Department, there are 460 residences, eight designated dispersed campsites, twelve day use sites, six developed trailheads and 24 trail systems. Currently SRR is used for a variety of outdoor recreation experiences including bicycling, running and walking; bird and wildlife viewing; ATV activities; horseback riding and pack trips; fishing, hiking, hunting and camping access; and, winter sports including snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. From some of the SRR camping sites, historic interpretation and trailheads can be accessed. Additionally, the area is highly used by permitted commercial firewood and morel mushroom collectors.

| Project Termini (Location) | | Mile Posts | Latitude (Decimal Degrees) | Longitude (Decimal Degrees) |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Begin | 0.0 | 45.998883 | -110.661496 |
| | End | 18.5 | 46.162352 | -110.440396 |
| | Nearest Town | Wilsall | Fed Congressional District | At Large |

Estimated Total Project Costs \$170,000.00

Funds Requested from Federal Lands Access Program \$147,186.00

Project Length (miles) 18.5 **County** Park County, Montana

Required Local Match (13.42%) \$22,814.00 **From** Park County, Montana

Other Funding Contributions to Project **From**

Acres of Federal Land Accessed by the Project

113,000 acres of Custer Gallatin National Forest with access into 1.7 million acres of Lewis and Clark National Forest (from Custer Gallatin Na

Functional Classification of the Roadway (Show official designations of route)

National Highway System Major Collector Local Road
 Arterial Minor Collector

| Traffic Volumes | Current | | | | 20 Year Projections | | Basis for Projections? (e.g. Transportation Plan, population growth rate...) |
|--|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
| | Actual Counts | | Estimated | | | | |
| | Start of Project | End of Project | Start of Project | End of Project | Start of Project | End of Project | |
| Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on Highway | | | 245 | 245 | 294 | 294 | Based on projections from Park County staff. |
| Seasonal Average Daily Traffic (peak season) (SADT) on Highway | | | 340 | 340 | 408 | 408 | Based on projections from Park County staff. |
| % Trucks | | | 8% | 8% | 10% | 10% | Based on projections from Park County staff. |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| % Federal Land Related | | | 52% | 82% | 57% | 89% | Based on projections from Park County staff. |
|------------------------|--|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|

Comments Estimates based on number of year-round residences in the area and accessible only by use of SRR, projected agriculture and logging operations requiring heavier truck traffic, forest service cabin occupancy rates and permitting information for grazing and logging.

| | | NBI Structure Number | Dimensions (Overall Length x Width) | Bridge Type | No. of Spans | NBIS Sufficiently Rating (1-100) |
|---|---|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------|----------------------------------|
| + | - | L34001000+03001 | 14552.7928 | Timber Beam | 2 | 86 |
| + | - | L34001003+09001 | 20322.2432 | Concrete Tee Beam | 3 | 89 |
| + | - | L34001014+07001 | 7050.3545 | Timber Beam | 1 | 89 |
| + | - | L34001017+0??? | NA | Under 20 feet, no NBI Assessment - Timber Beam | 1 | NA |

Problem Statement: What purpose does this transportation facility serve? What is the need for this project? Who will this project serve (such as skiers, communities, hikers...)? What are the conditions requiring relief? Describe the consequences if these conditions are not addressed. Describe physical and functional deficiencies, anticipated changes in use, safety problems, capacity issues, bridge deficiencies, pavement or surface conditions, etc.

The purpose of the planning activities associated with this project is to provide planning for safer and more adequate transportation access to and through CGNF for residents, recreationists, visitors and resource users. Park County is responsible for maintenance on the first 18.5 miles of SRR; the USFS is responsible from that point forward and including the SRR Loop road and several primary arterial routes. SRR is an asphalt-surfaced minor collector road that serves residents, business persons, ranchers, local recreationists and a multitude of visitors to the area. The project area has approximately 480 residences and three local businesses but serves multiple fishing and hunting guides and outfitters. Residential traffic uses the road year-round and several agricultural production entities use the road for personal, commodity and/or supply transport.

SRR parallels the Shields River which begins in the Crazy Mountains and flows 62 miles with the confluence of the Yellowstone River. It is a unique watershed in that it provides substantial habitat for Yellowstone cutthroat trout - the watershed contains 66% of the core and conservation populations. In the past twenty years, over \$4 million has been spent on diversion dams and fish passage infrastructure within parts of the Shields River to maximize the watershed as a basin-level stronghold for Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

The area attracts a wide demographic from young to old, hunters to bicyclists, leisure weekend drivers to eager college students venturing over the Brackett Creek Road and/or Bridger Canyon Road from Montana State University for hiking and fishing - all seeking access to the large amount of public land that offers many recreation opportunities. Within the last twenty years, over fifty new homes and cabins have been built in the SRR area, many of them accessing their properties through NF-991 (Smith Creek Road). The use in the area has changed significantly with the surge in primary home and secondary home construction; that growth has spurred increased ATV and snowmobile usage on many of the primary arterial forest service roads. The corridor is also unique in that it serves a national forest that has many disputed and contentious access points; because of many access point closures through landowner disputes, the SRR is the most heavily utilized road on the west side of the Crazy Mountains used by recreationists to venture to and enjoy public lands.

Located mostly parallel to US Highway 89 North – one of the major north/south routes between Yellowstone National Park to Glacier National Park - the road provides access to a multitude of additional outdoor recreation activities for visitors eager to explore south-central Montana. With over 850 miles of hiking trails through the entirety of the smaller CGNF North area (which is heavily traversed by many seeking to explore the Crazy Mountains), avid recreationists frequent the area in order to hike, backpack, fish, trail run, horseback ride, bike, camp, view wildlife, picnic, hunt, back country and/or cross country ski, snowshoe, use off-road vehicles, snowmobile or to enjoy photography or scenic drive time. Nearly every ancillary parking area and camping area serves as a starting point for a variety of uses. Camping opportunities include over 30 undesignated dispersed camping areas along the road and eight designated dispersed campsites at the SRR Campground located near the Crandall Creek cabin (owned and operated by CGNF and with a 72% occupancy rate). The Crandall Creek cabin accommodates six people and is rented at \$35/night. CGNF also owns and operates two other cabins in the area including the Porcupine (accommodates 8 people at \$45/night) and Ibex (accommodating 4 people at \$35/night) cabins.

SRR is comprised of 17.25 miles of asphalt surfacing with various PASER ratings between 2 to 5 (scale of 0-10 with 10 rated as new) and 1.25 miles of gravel surfacing with a PASER rating of 3 to 4 (scale of 0-5 with 5 rated as excellent). The road is maintained by Park County for 18.5 miles and then maintained by CGNF (as NF-844) for the next three miles including an additional popular loop (approximately nine miles) that provides users with close access to the headwaters of the Shields River. Physical deficiencies observed during the PASER evaluation of the road includes traverse cracking, block cracking, longitudinal cracking, potholes, polishing and minor raveling. Photographs of current conditions are included as an attachment to this application.

No anticipated changes in road use will occur as a result of project planning activities; but recommendations in the PER will likely result in recommendations for change if necessary to improve functionality and access to public lands. If project planning activities do not take place the road condition can be expected to continue to deteriorate and will require significantly more work to restore to adequate condition when funding can be scheduled and completed. Planning for the short-term and long-term needs of the system through development of a thorough PER is a prudent and beneficial way to ascertain the future capital improvement needs and associated costs.

| | |
|---|---|
| Improving the quality of the roadway surface based on PER recommendations will allow for improved future visitor experiences and increased recreational use including the potential for alternative transportation activities. | |
| Detailed Description of Proposed Capital Improvement, Enhancement, or Surface Preservation: Describe how the proposed project will address the problem. Describe the overall design concept, scope of work, any unusual design elements, design or operational standards, and any work affecting structures (bridges and major culverts). Include widths, surfacing type, surfacing depth, earthwork needs, roadside safety features, ancillary parking areas, signing improvements, bridge work, guardrail improvements, etc. Include optimum year work should be done and year work needs to be done no later than. | |
| NA | |
| Detailed Description of Proposed Transit Service: Provide operational details of the proposed service. What are specific destinations the route will serve? Is the service year-round or seasonal? What are the operating dates/service hours/day of week? Describe transit route details, including miles, number of stops, and variability in service operations. Describe any marketing, way finding, or other information that will be disseminated to promote service. | |
| NA | |
| Detailed Description of Proposed Planning: Describe the details of this planning and the final product that will be developed. Would this planning effort support projects that could be submitted under future Federal Lands Access Program requests for proposals? | |
| The proposed planning project will include engineering studies, geotechnical analysis and corridor management planning for the rehabilitation of the 18.5-mile SRR. Preliminary work will include scoping, right-of-way (ROW) evaluation, geotechnical investigation, utility analysis, environmental resource and permitting scanning and evaluation of construction alternatives to rehabilitate the roadway through future Federal Lands Access Program proposals or other federal or state funding agency proposals. Future work activities that will likely be included as recommendations in the PER will include improvements to the road surface and bridges; roadside safety structures; safety enhancements; ancillary parking areas, pullouts and interpretive sites; earthwork; road base or surface course; and, bicycle/pedestrian facilities. Future FLAP requests for proposed projects would be supported by this PER. | |
| Detailed Description of Proposed Research: Describe the type of research and the final product for this effort. Describe the need for the research and how this research enhances safety, access or sustainability. | |
| NA | |
| Right-of-Way Acquisition: Describe which agency (agencies) has title for the project and how that title is documented. Describe which agency (agencies) has maintenance responsibilities for the project. Does new ROW need to be acquired? If so, how much, how many owners, and what is the anticipated time (months) to acquire all needed ROW? How does the applicant plan to acquire the ROW? Will coordination with any railroads be needed? What is your agency's experience acquiring ROW for federally-funded or assisted projects? | |
| ROW title and maintenance responsibilities for the planning area will be identified as part of the planning activities. The need to acquire ROW will also be determined as part of the planning project. There are no railroad lines in the project area. | |
| Utilities: Identify utilities in the roadway corridor or project site. Would relocation be needed? What agreements exist and who pays for relocation costs? | |
| Utilities along the roadway corridor will be identified as part of the planning activities and relocation and agreement needs would be addressed in the report. | |
| Project is identified within the following (Check all that apply and show plan name) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> System Transportation Plan | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal Land Management Plan | Gallatin Forest Plan; Gallatin National Forest Travel Management Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Transportation Plan | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Transportation System Plan | Park County Active Transportation Plan; Park County Growth Policy; Park County Capital Improvements Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Transportation Plan | |
| Would the proposal require modification or amendments to any of these plans? | No modification or amendments to any of these plans will be required as a result of this proposed planning project. |

Which of the following environmental and social issues are within the project area?

| | Yes | No | Unknown | Comments |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Wetlands | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wetlands are part of the proposed project planning area and will be addressed in the final PER. |
| Threatened & endangered Species | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Threatened and endangered species habitat may be part of the proposed project planning area and will be addressed in the final PER. |
| Other Fish & Wildlife Habitat | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fish and wildlife habitat is part of the proposed project planning area and will be addressed in the final PER. |
| Wildlife Movement Corridors | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Wildlife movement corridors may be part of the proposed project planning area and will be addressed in the final PER. |
| Wild & Scenic River | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is no wild and scenic river associated with the planning area. |
| Non-Attainment Air Quality Areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no non-attainment air quality areas of concern in the planning area. |
| Cultural/Archeological/Historic Sites | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Cultural/archeological/historic sites may be part of the proposed project planning area and will be addressed in the final PER. |
| Public Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no public parks located within the planning area. |
| Wildlife Refuge | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no wildlife refuges located within the planning area. |
| Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The MT Natural Resource Information System database was accessed to determine if any hazardous materials were located in the project planning area. There are no known hazardous materials located within the planning area but this issue will be addressed in the final PER. |
| Stream Encroachments | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no known stream encroachments located within the planning area but this issue will be addressed in the final PER. |

Describe any other environmental or social issues that should be considered that are within the project area: Is the route included in an area receiving special management considerations for water quality, wildlife security, connectivity?

In 2004, before major road work was performed on a 5.6-mile section of SRR, the United States Forest Service released a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) relative to the Shields River Road Improvement Environmental Assessment. Environmental consequences were considered and the decision was made to proceed with improvements to the road including widening the roadway to between 24 and 26 feet (two traffic lanes) and laying a gravel surface on the Forest Service section; replacing the Deep Creek bridge; construction a parking area with an accessible toilet at the junction of SRR and Sunlight (#6630) roads; and relocating gates closer to the parking area at #6630. Environmental effects based on project activities were ranked low to moderate in terms of risk.

In conversations with CGNF Yellowstone District Ranger Alex Sienkiewicz, there are currently no special management considerations for water quality, wildlife security or connectivity at this time. However, those considerations would be an integral part of the PER.

Describe the range of attitudes, both support and opposition, that this proposed project may receive from organizations, the public and within your own agency: State the basis for this supposition and include coordination efforts and public involvement efforts completed to date.

Related to this proposed planning project, Park County staff has been in contact with CGNF Yellowstone District Ranger Alex Sienkiewicz with additional support from CGNF Forest Engineer, Jonathan Kempff and CGNF Services Director, Elizabeth McFarland. Recent conversations with District Ranger Sienkiewicz included discussion of mixed views of roadway condition needs in the area. Many landowners prefer the road conditions to remain as they are and minimally maintained so as to reduce traffic and reduce traffic speeds, while others (many among those that have moved into the area in recent years and built new homes and/or cabins) prefer paved roadways that allow for faster traveling speeds and safer and more reliable roads especially those in areas with one ingress/egress. The safety of many of the new full-time and part-time residents (and including those visitors that rent residences while on vacation) traveling on several of the roads that intersect with SRR and provide the only ingress and egress into private properties is in constant question. Large stands of dead timber that have not yet been harvested pose serious fire risks in many areas where property owners only have one way in and out of their properties and the surfaces of the roads impede faster movement out of areas in the event of a wildfire. These considerations will be researched during the planning activities associated with the PER.

The lead agency for project delivery will be WFLHD: The project proponents may request another agency take the lead for project delivery. If recommending a different agency be lead, indicate below which agency and provide rationale for recommendation. The rationale should include why another agency should take the lead, previous experience in delivering Federal-Aid (Title 23) funded projects, any certifications to deliver Federal-Aid funded projects, and ability to satisfy Federal Highway Administration project delivery requirements. The final decision for project delivery resides with the PDC.

MDT

Federal Land Management Agency

Certified Local Agency

Non-Certified Local Agency

No other agency is being recommended for project lead activities. If necessary, Park County has lead other similar efforts for similar types of planning studies and can assist with associated needs.

****Transit Supplemental Questions:** *For Transit Proposals only*, please answer the following: If transit service is currently being provided to this Federal Land Management Agency unit or service has been provided in the past, please provide details about service parameters, ridership, cost per passenger, and any other pertinent information. What revenue will be collected to support the service? Describe fare pricing, discounts, pass programs, etc. Provide number, type, and age of current fleet. What is the daily number of riders estimated currently and/or at project completion? Describe how the proposed transit service will be financially sustainable with current and future sources of funding.

NA

****Research Supplemental Questions:** *For Research Proposals only*, please answer the following: Please provide details on how this research is broad-based and not narrowly focused on a localized problem. Provide specific examples showing how this research product can be used across multiple agencies.

NA

Cost Estimate for Capital Improvement, Enhancement, and Surface Preservation Projects

Fill-in estimates for appropriate items. Add items as needed. **Use Current Unit Prices.**

| Quantity | Item | Unit Price | Unit | Total |
|----------|--|------------|--------------|-------|
| | Clearing and Grubbing | | Acres | |
| | Roadway Excavation | | Cubic Yards | |
| | Imported Borrow | | Cubic Yards | |
| | Sub-Excavation | | Cubic Yards | |
| | Water / Dust Abatement | | Gallons | |
| | Recycled Asphalt (milling, pulverizing, ripping) | | Square Yards | |
| | Asphalt concrete pavement | | Tons | |
| | Aggregate Base (may include stabilization) | | Cubic Yards | |
| | Aggregate Sub-Base | | Cubic Yards | |
| | Major Culverts | | Each | |
| | Minor Culverts | | Each | |
| | Retaining Walls | | Square Feet | |
| | Rip Rap & Slope Protection | | Cubic Yards | |
| | Revegetation | | Acres | |
| | Signing | | Square Feet | |
| | Pavement Marking | | Linear Feet | |
| | Roadside Safety (barriers, guardrail) | | Linear Feet | |
| | Bridges | | Lump Sum | |
| | Traffic Control | | Lump Sum | |
| | Utility Relocation | | Lump Sum | |

Use table on the next page for additional items.

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|------------------|--|
| | | | Sub-Total | |
| | Mobilization (As percentage of Sub-Total) Typically 10%, input estimated percentage in decimal form. For example: 0.10 | | Lump Sum | |
| | Contingencies(As percentage of Sub-Total)Typically 30%, input estimated percentage in decimal form. For example: 0.30 | | Lump Sum | |
| Total Estimated Construction Cost | | | | |
| Estimated Preliminary Engineering Costs (As a percentage of the Total Estimated Construction Cost) Typically 5 to 25 percent, depending upon project scope and complexity. Input estimated percentage in decimal form. For example: 0.15 | | | | |
| Estimated Right of Way Costs | | | | |
| Total Estimated Preliminary Engineering Costs | | | | |
| Estimated Construction Engineering Costs (As a percentage of the Total Estimated Construction Cost) Typically 5 to 20 percent, depending upon project scope and complexity. Input estimated percentage in decimal form. For example: 0.10 | | | | |
| Estimated Construction Engineering Costs | | | | |
| Total Project Costs | | | | |

Cost Estimate for Capital Improvement, Enhancement, and Surface Preservation Projects (Cont.)

Add items as needed. Use Current Unit Prices.

| | | Quantity | Item | Unit Price | Unit | Total |
|---|---|----------|------|------------|------|------------------|
| + | - | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Sub-Total |

Comments:

Cost Estimate for Transit Projects

Add items as needed. Use Current Unit Prices.

| | | Quantity | Item | Unit Price | Unit | Total |
|---|---|----------|------|------------|------|----------------------------|
| + | - | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Total Project Costs |

Comments:

Cost Estimate for Planning and Research Projects

Add items as needed. Use Current Unit Prices.

| | | Quantity | Item | Unit Price | Unit | Total |
|---|---|----------|--------------------------------|--------------|------|----------------------------|
| + | - | 1 | Preliminary Engineering Report | \$170,000.00 | | \$170,000.00 |
| + | - | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Total Project Costs |
| | | | | | | \$170,000.00 |

Comments:

Planning costs for this project are based on recent planning project costs associated with similar projects in the area including the Paradise Valley Corridor Planning Study (2014) and the Bridger Canyon Corridor Planning Study (2015) and from costs associated with current FLAP projects currently underway in Park County. A breakdown of costs is estimated at:

- ROW Investigation - \$10,000
- Geotechnical - \$50,000 (including boreholes along roadway and development of proposed reconstruction section)
- Pre-Survey - \$15,000
- Resource Evaluations - \$45,000 (pre-NEPA data collection activities)
- Engineering - \$35,000 (scoping, bridge condition verification, cost evaluation, estimate development, construction logistics, phases of activities, etc.)
- Report Preparation - \$15,000 (providing summary and recommendations)

Required Local Contribution to Project: Describe the type and source of funds to provide the required 13.42% local match. Describe any soft match, in-kind match, or eligible Federal funds that will be used to satisfy the match requirement.

Park County is committed to providing the \$22,814 (13.42% match) and a letter of commitment has been included as an attachment to this application.

Other Contributions to the Project: Describe any additional contributions secured or being sought to implement the project proposal. Does this opportunity possibly leverage other funds?

Park County is committed to providing \$22,814 in cash match toward the planning project. No other contributions are anticipated for this project. ROW documentation and coordination with other federal agencies on a local level (soft match) will also be provided by Park County staff as the plan is developed.

How does the project relate to the following evaluation criteria?

1. SAFETY

Improvement of the Transportation Network for the safety of its users.

- a) How many and what type of crashes have occurred on the project site in the last five years? Describe the basis for your information and include reported accidents and anecdotal information. Provide maps showing accident locations.
- b) How would the proposed project improve unsafe conditions such as crash sites, inadequate sight distance, roadside hazards, poor vertical/horizontal alignment, hazardous intersections, inadequate lane and shoulder widths, etc?
- c) How does the proposed project address potentially unsafe locations such as where recreation use may create traffic conflicts with local or through traffic?
- d) How does the project address safety for a wide range of users (freight, destination motorists, touring motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, public transportation)?
- e) What are the results/recommendations of any road safety audits conducted for the project?
- f) Is the project identified in a strategic safety plan?

a. Based upon information from Park County's Sheriff's Office and from MDT Traffic Data Analyst information, there have been no reported crashes in the proposed planning project area in the last five years.

b. Planning efforts resulting in a PER would likely provide recommendations to improve unsafe conditions including potential crash sites, inadequate sight distance areas, roadside hazards, poor vertical/horizontal alignment, hazardous intersections, inadequate lane widths and lack of shoulder areas. The report will also assess whether other safety issues are present that can be addressed in connection with future road improvement projects, such as mowing, hazard tree removal and shoulder improvements to provide for the number of bicyclists that utilize the corridor.

c. The project location serves local traffic consisting of working personnel for CGNF and fire prevention and suppression and the area is a popular hunting and fishing destination. In addition the road serves multiple agricultural equipment and vehicles, recreation traffic, bicycles. Logging operations (with associated equipment and vehicles) occur often in the area (some on private land) and due to large pine bark beetle kill areas resulting in large stands of dead timber, CGNF is planning to harvest between 1,000 to 3,000 acres of timber within the next two years.

d. The project area provides primary and/or sole access to destination motorists headed for recreation activities, touring motorists, bike tourists, mountain bikers and pedestrians. Destination include fishing, camping, hunting, hiking and picnic areas, alpine lakes and streams, several trailheads and campgrounds, waterfalls, scenic vistas and private and CGNF rental cabins. The road is used extensively by hunters, hikers, campers, horseback riders (using trailers to haul stock), fishermen, bicycle tourists, mountain bikers, and many other recreationists. Forest fire prevention and suppression personnel use the road and future logging will occur in this area. All of these uses involve a wide range of users and motor vehicles from heavy haul equipment to horse trailers, motorcycles and recreational vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians. By preparing a detailed PER related to the future improvement needs of the road, the planning project will address all safety issues for this wide range of users.

e. There are no road safety audits that have been prepared for SRR; however, the proposed PER will provide the results and recommendations related to safety needs for this area.

f. Park County does not have any strategic safety plans related to this road; however, the project is identified in several other area plans including the Park County Capital Improvements Plan, the Park County Growth Policy (currently being updated with Land Solutions through Community Development Block Grant funds), the Park County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the Park County Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Park County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan (soon to be updated through MT Dept. of Disaster and Emergency Services funds).

2. PRESERVATION

Improvement of the transportation infrastructure for economy of operation and maintenance.

- a) What is the current condition to the existing surfacing? If the surfacing is pavement, what is the Pavement Condition Index (PCI)? If the surface is gravel, what is the PASER rating? How would the project improve the surface condition?
- b) How would the project impact maintenance or operating costs? How will this project reduce these costs?
- c) If the proposal includes bridge work, how will the project extend the service life of the bridge? Would the proposal correct a "deficient" bridge?

a. The current condition of the existing surfacing can be described as fair. The proposed planning area – approximately 18.5 miles - is a roadway consisting of asphalt/millings and has a PASER rating of 2 to 5. Planning for future projects associated with upgrades and capital improvements to this roadway would improve the rating of the road surface to excellent condition as well as reduce maintenance and operating costs. Four major Park County-related plans that were recently completed would assist in the development of the proposed PER including:

- Park County Transportation Standards to provide guidance regarding hard surface road cost/benefit compared to gravel roads with regards to long term operation, maintenance and budget requirements;
- Park County Capital Improvements Plan to serve as a planning and implementation tool for the acquisition, development, construction, maintenance and renovation of public facilities, infrastructure and capital equipment;
- Park County Bridge Capital Improvements Plan to guide the County with policies for replacing old and unsafe bridges with culverts, when feasible; and, replacing bridges with new structures (where culverts cannot be substituted) that meet current AASHTO and MDT standards. Bridges requiring rehabilitation or replacement are prioritized annually.
- Park County Active Transportation Plan to provide recommendations for alternative transportation planning while focusing on four strategic priorities supplemented by local and regional transportation plans.

b. Future projects, as a result of recommendations from the PER, will reduce operation and maintenance costs by primarily restoring the travel surfaces and provide some reestablishment of ditches to convey runoff.

c. Bridge work could be identified as a result of planning efforts but the Assessment Forms, last updated by Montana Department of Transportation in August 2015, identifies L34001000+03001, L34001003+09001 and L34001014+07001 bridges with sufficiency ratings of 86,89 and 89 respectively. L34001017+0000 is under 20' and does not have a current sufficiency rating.

3. RECREATION AND ECONOMIC

Development and utilization of the Federal Land and its resources.

- a) Describe any high use Federal recreation sites or Federal economic generators (as determined by the Federal Land Manager) that are accessed by this project. How many visitors access/use the site annually? How does the project enhance access to these sites? How does the proposal improve the visitor experience?
- b) Which Federal Lands are accessed by this project? How much Federal Land (acres) is accessed by the project? If multiple Federal Lands are accessed, itemize acreage by agency.

Enhancement of economic development at the local, regional, or national level, including tourism and recreational travel.

Note: Direct effects of implementing the project, i.e. construction employment will not be scored.

- c) Identify the community or communities economically dependent on the network, and the elements that comprise the economy (e.g. timber, tourism, etc.) How is the economy tied to the transportation network? How will the proposed project improve the transportation network and support the community's economic goals/needs or other economic plan?
- d) If the proposed project is located on a designated federal, state, or county scenic byway, identify the scenic byway and explain the anticipated benefit related to the byway. Would the project meet the needs identified in the Byway's management plan?

a. The CGNF Yellowstone Ranger District manages the recreation sites around SRR which are accessed by NF-844, a primary part-paved, part gravel arterial road that provides public access to over 113,000 acres of forest service land. Popular destinations include several lakes, cabins, campgrounds, waterfalls, trailheads and numerous collector and local forest roads. These destinations attract an estimated 20,000 visitors annually via SRR. The area is also used for timber harvesting and hosts a large number of hunters, snowmobilers and ATV recreationists in multiple seasons.

b. Federal lands accessed by this project include CGNF (113,000 acres) directly off of SRR. From roads and routes within CGNF, users are also able to access Lewis and Clark National Forest (1.7 million acres). According to the USDA Forest Service National Visitor Use Monitoring Results, estimated national visitation to the Northern Region national forests from 2008 to 2012 averaged 8,401,000 visitors annually. Park County Public Works Dept. staff estimates annual visitation in this area of CGNF at close to 30,000 persons. No formal counts are conducted by the Forest Service for this specific area of CGNF.

The project planning activities would provide solutions for future projects that could enhance access to these sites by improving the

existing asphalt road to meet County standards, eliminating some safety concerns with striping and signage, resurfacing of bridge structures and provide wider and more safe shoulder areas for bicyclists. By planning for future capital improvement needs, the proposed project will make areas served by the roadway more accessible to all kinds of recreationists that utilize many modes of travel, including pedestrians, cyclists, horse trailers, ATV and snowmobile trailers and RV vehicles.

c. SRR provides year-round and seasonal access to residences, camping areas, trails, fishing areas and CGNF. Several communities receive economic benefits from SRR activities and the amenities it offers including Livingston, Wilsall, Clyde Park and several towns in nearby Meagher and Sweet Grass Counties. Recreational facilities and opportunities available through SRR access to CGNF are a major source of revenue for the area businesses that sell fuel, sporting and camping equipment, groceries, meals, clothing, souvenirs and other tourist associated commodities. Recreationists also contribute to the local economy by hiring one of nearly two dozen local commercial outfitters or guides for fishing, hunting, horseback riding and/or pack trip activities permitted by CGNF in this area. Businesses in the aforementioned towns would suffer from loss of revenue if SRR did not exist and provide the multitude of opportunities that it does. The proposed improvements also improve access for agricultural and timber harvest interests that work in and near CGNF and the Shields River drainage.

Implementation of this planning project supports the realization of certain Park County Growth Policy land use, economic and transportation-related goals and objectives including LU 1.1: Support the right to farm and ranch; LU 6.1: Encourage the preservation of existing public trails in Park County; ED 1.1: Strengthen Park County's economy by supporting industries/initiatives that increase residents' personal income and employment opportunities; T 1.1: Identify costs and revenues for maintaining and improving all roads and for accepting new roads into the Park County road system; and, T 1.4: Design and manage County roads to conform with city, state and federal transportation systems.

SRR intersects the Montana designated "Yellowstone B-Line" which is the scenic route via US Highway 89 North from Yellowstone National Park to Glacier National Park. As such, traffic is heavy, with numerous RVs and pull -trailers.

d. NA

4. MOBILITY

Continuity of the transportation network serving the Federal Land and its dependent communities.

- a) Is the road the sole access to the area? Will the proposed project mitigate the potential of the route closing?
- b) How would the proposed project improve the continuity of the transportation network? Which gaps or missing links would the proposed project address? What travel restrictions, bottlenecks, or size/load limits impede travel? What work has been completed on adjacent sections to create route continuity?
- c) Does the proposed project connect to a designated route on the Federal Land Management Agency's FLTP inventory? Are there any future improvements planned on the designated route?
- d) Identify all planning documents related to this project. Is the project specifically identified in any of these plans? What is the local or regional priority (high, medium, low) of the project considering the Federal Land, State or County network? How does this proposal fit with the Federal Land Management Plan? How does the proposal fit with the county comprehensive plan? How does the proposal fit with any Transportation System Plans or Corridor Plans? What are the consequences to the transportation system of not addressing these needs?

Mobility of the users of the transportation network and the goods and services provided.

- e) How would the proposed improvements reduce travel time and congestion, increase comfort and convenience for the federal land user?
- f) How would the proposed project improve the choices for alternative modes of travel (pedestrian, bike, bus, or rail)? Would the proposed project make any ADA improvements?
- g) What are the major traffic generators within the Federal Land for this route?

a. SRR and its continuance as National Forest Road 844 runs northeast through the middle of a large part of the Yellowstone Ranger District. SRR provides primary access to this vast area, and sole access to over 50% of property owners in the area. If funded, the planning project will provide solutions that could eliminate the likelihood of failure of the road, which would result in road closure for an extended period of time until repairs could be completed. Closure would require a detour of at least 25 miles by circuitous non-county roads, many of which are gravel.

b. The planning project will improve continuity by ensuring the sole connection to Forest Road #844 remains open and available to public land recreationists. Prior work to the area occurred in 2005 on the last 5.6 miles of SRR road, funded by Federal Highways Administration. Construction activities upgraded the section to better provide for the demands of year-round access to CGNF, including widening the travel surface to 26 feet and paving the travel way. Once the improvements to the 5.6 mile section were completed, Park County assumed jurisdiction and maintenance responsibilities.

c. The goal of the project is to maintain the continuity that SRR currently provides all users. Current bottlenecks and travel restrictions associated with narrower roadway areas will be studied in order to recommend improvements to roadway width, ancillary pullouts and parking areas as well as inclusion of project activities to improve some of the softer and more vulnerable shoulder areas. The proposed planning area is part of a designated route on the FLMA inventory. It accesses many designated routes including roads and trail systems,

as well as motorized and non-motorized routes.

d. SRR (NF-844) is the sole access road to the Shields River drainage. It is the only ingress/egress to all residences, camps, cabins, trailheads and other amenities in the Shields River drainage. While project activities are not proposed in order to mitigate potential closure to the route, the benefits of providing a safer and more adequate roadway improve mobility of users in the area. Additionally, improvements to the roadways, a result of PER recommendations, will reduce current maintenance efforts and costs.

Park County recently completed its County Transportation Standards to provide guidance regarding hard surface road cost/benefit compared to gravel roads with regards to long term operation, maintenance and budget requirements. Park County and CGNF do collaborate for maintenance assistance.

The current conditions of the road range can be considered fair. NF-844 provides seasonal and year-round access to residents, recreationists, forest management and emergency response departments. The road also provides the only ingress and egress to over 50% of properties and recreation areas on SRR

The goal of the project is to maintain the continuity that Mill SRR currently provides all users through recommendations of future capital improvement projects. Current bottlenecks and travel restrictions associated with narrower roadway areas will be upgraded with improvements to ancillary pullouts and parking areas as well as inclusion of project activities to improve some of the softer and more vulnerable shoulder areas.

The proposed planning area is part of a designated route on the FLMA inventory. It accesses many designated routes including roads, as well as motorized and non- motorized routes. Lauren Oswald, Recreation and Wilderness Program Manager with CGNF has identified upcoming work on forest service roads and trails that are all accessed via SRR will include general maintenance of blading and grading in 2016 and 2017.

Planning documents that share common goals and/or future activities specifically related to this project include: Park County Growth Policy; Park County Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP); Park County Active Transportation Plan; Park County Capital Improvements Plan; Gallatin Forest Plan; the Gallatin National Forest Travel Management Plan; and, the Shields River Road Improvement Environmental Assessment.

- Park County Growth Policy – As previously described, this project meets goals and objectives consistent with the Park County Growth Policy including multiple goals from Chapter 3 – Community Goals, Objectives, Implementation Measures (3.2 – Land Use; 3.3 – Natural Resources; 3.4 County Services; 3.5 Economic Development; and, 3.8 Transportation); and Chapter 6 – Infrastructure Strategy (6.4 – Roads and Bridges).
- Park County CWPP – Designed for all of Park County and crosses all state, federal and private protection boundaries and is a plan designed to protect the community from wildland fires. This plan discusses risk assessment, structural ignitability and ignition probability of high use recreation areas in Park County – with the Shields River drainage being one of the priority areas.
- Park County Active Transportation Plan (PCATP) – This PER would meet strategies and priorities identified in the PCATP. The PCATP is a consolidation of two existing plans – the Park County Park Plan – September 2007 and the Livingston/Park County Trails Plan – November 2006. It is also updated to include the existing facilities in the County; types of parks and recreational facilities; discussion of existing regulations; management strategies of parks, trails and recreation facilities; recommendations for future community needs and desires; and, ideas to stimulate discussions about goals and the obtainment of those goals.
- Park County Capital Improvements Plan - The Park County Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is a budgeting and financial tool which will assist Park County in establishing long-term goals for maintaining, improving or financing new capital improvement projects and/or capital equipment over the course of the next five years. This document represents the first-ever, fully-funded five-year CIP for Park County which will be utilized to assist county leaders with project planning, financing and determining the overall needs of their population.
- Gallatin Forest Plan – This plan was set forth in 1987 and updated in 2009 with objectives to recognize and manage for the high quality recreational, vegetative and wildlife resources found on the Gallatin National Forest.
- Gallatin National Forest Travel Management Plan – A plan for analyzing alternatives for managing public access and travel within the Gallatin National Forest in Montana.
- Shields River Road Improvement Decision Notice and Environmental Assessment – Documents District Ranger Ron Archuleta’s decision to select Alternative A which calls for improving NF #844, replacement of the Deep Creek Bridge, construction of a parking area with an accessible toilet at the junction of the Shields and Sunlight (#6630) Roads and relocation of gates.

In consideration of application length and file size recommendations, specific links to the above-referenced plans, policies and related documents can be accessed at:

- <http://www.parkcounty.org/site/pdfs/Pln/GrowthPolicy.pdf>
- <http://www.parkcounty.org/site/pdfs/FW/2009WildfireProtectionPlan.pdf>
- <http://www.parkcounty.org/uploads/files/departments/25/Final-Park-County-Active-Transportation-Plan.pdf>
- <http://www.parkcounty.org/pdfs/CCP/Park%20County%202016-2020%20Capital%20Improvements%20Plan.pdf>
- http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5133419.pdf

This project was prioritized in 2015 Park County capital improvements planning meetings as one of the top two unfunded capital road

projects for the next 5 years and in need of financial assistance to construct in 20-year assessment.

The proposed project would improve level of services for the road to meet Forest Plan goals of providing a broad spectrum of recreation opportunities in a variety of forest settings and providing additional access to national forest lands.

Protection of people from fire involves removing them from the path of a wildfire as quickly as possible. Park County CWPP prioritizes the SRR drainage as one of the more significant Wildland Urban Interface areas at risk and identifies major probability of ignition in the area, with roads accessed solely by SRR serving as the only ingress/egress to the area. The proposed project would provide recommendations that could significantly upgrade SRR which would meet Park County CWPP and Gallatin Forest Plan goals of providing fire protection and use program, which is responsive to land and resource management goals and objectives.

As previously discussed, the study will identify feasible improvement options to address safety and geometrical concerns within the transportation corridor based on needs presented by the public, the study partners, and resource agencies. The study will examine geometric characteristics and crash history, as well as existing and projected operational characteristics of the corridor, physical constraints, land uses and environmental resources.

If project activities do not take place the road condition can be expected to continue to deteriorate requiring significantly more work to restore to excellent condition when funding for recommended projects can be implemented.

e. Recommendations from the PER would likely include road improvements that will restore the level of service to match posted speed limits and evaluate the need for ancillary roadside development such as pullouts and widened shoulders for users.

f. The planning project has the potential to improve the choices for alternative modes of travel by making recommendations for accommodations of bicyclists and pedestrians. By improving the road surfaces and ancillary parking and pull-out areas, the proposed project will relieve some congestion problems at bottle-neck areas especially for larger vehicles used by visitors including pull-behind campers, RV's, horse trailers and snowmobile trailers. Planning could also prioritize improvement of the conditions faced by emergency responders that travel the roadway year-round for a variety of EMS, law, fire and flooding issues.

g. Major traffic generators within this route include agriculture operations, campgrounds, cabins, logging operations, vacation rentals by owners and a multitude of hiking, hunting, snowmobiling, ATV and backpacking areas.

5. SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protection and enhancement of the rural environment associated with the Federal Land and its resources.

Note: It is assumed all projects will be constructed in accordance with all environmental regulations.

This scoring is for projects which enhance environmental goals.

- a) Describe how the proposed project contributes to the environmental goals and objectives of the Federal Land Management Plan or other applicable land management plan.
- b) How would the project enhance wildlife connectivity, wildlife habitat, and/or aquatic organism passage?
- c) How would the project enhance water quality, riparian and/or wetland function?
- d) Does the project use design, materials, or techniques that will exceed the minimum environmental requirements?
- e) Does the project contribute to improved environmental quality from GHG reduction?
- f) Would the project require unique mitigation for impacts?
- g) Would the project contribute to the use of sustainable energy sources for transportation?

a. In 2004, before major road work was performed on a 5.6-mile section of SRR, the United States Forest Service released a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) relative to the Shields River Road Improvement Environmental Assessment. Environmental consequences were considered and the decision was made to proceed with improvements to the road including widening the roadway to between 24 and 26 feet (two traffic lanes) and laying a gravel surface on the Forest Service section; replacing the Deep Creek bridge; construction a parking area with an accessible toilet at the junction of SRR and Sunlight (#6630) roads; and relocating gates closer to the parking area at #6630. Environmental effects based on project activities were ranked low to moderate in terms of risk.

b. Planning efforts as a result of the PER preparation for this project area would include considerations for enhancement of wildlife connectivity, wildlife habitat and aquatic organism passage.

c. Similar to the above considerations, planning efforts as a result of the PER preparation for this project area would include considerations for enhancement of water quality, riparian and/or wetland function.

d. The proposed PER will be a planning-level assessment of the study area occurring before project-level environmental compliance activities under the National and Montana Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA/MEPA). The corridor study process will be designed to determine what options are available to improve the corridor and to facilitate a smooth and efficient transition from transportation planning to environmental review and potential project development. The process will involve conducting a planning-level review of safety, operational and geometric conditions and environmental resources within a corridor to identify needs and constraints. The process

will also allow for early coordination with members of the public, resource agencies, land managers and other interested stakeholders. The plan will include an environmental scan that is distinct from a NEPA/MEPA environmental compliance document or design, right-of-way acquisition or construction phases that occur during project development.


e. Planning efforts will provide recommendations to improve environmental quality from greenhouse gas reduction.

f. Mitigation for impacts from future projects are unlikely but planning efforts will likely identify any potential for unique mitigation areas.

g. Planning efforts will not contribute to the use of sustainable energy sources for transportation.

2016 Montana Federal Lands Access Program

JOINT ENDORSEMENT- This project is supported and endorsed by (add agency endorsements as needed)

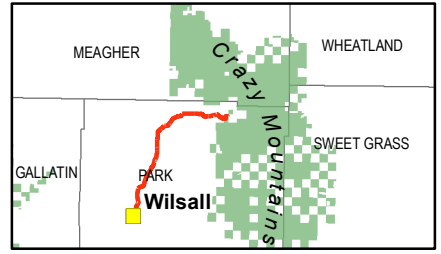
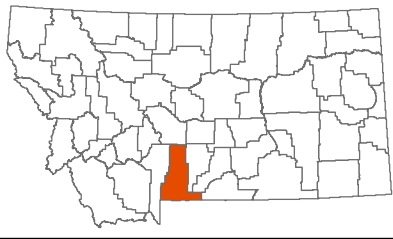
| | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | Shields River Road Planning Project |
| Federal Land Agency (ies) | Custer Gallatin National Forest |
| Federal Land Unit Manager Name | Mary Erickson |
| Title | Supervisor |
| Handwritten Signature (s) required |  <i>Mary Erickson, DEP. FOREST SUPERVISOR</i> |
| Date | March 18, 2016 |
| Email Address | mcerickson@fs.fed.us |
| Telephone | 406-587-6701 |
| Point of Contact | Alex Sienkiewicz |
| Title | District Ranger |
| Email Address | alexsienkiewicz@fs.fed.us |
| Telephone | 406-823-6066 |

| | |
|---|--|
| State, County, Local, or Tribal Government | Park County, Montana |
| Agency Official's Name | Clint Tinsley |
| Title | Commission Chairman |
| Handwritten Signature (s) required |  <i>Clint Tinsley</i> |
| Date | March 17, 2016 |
| Email Address | ctinsley@parkcounty.org |
| Telephone | 406-222-4106 |
| Point of Contact | Parks Frady, PE |
| Title | Public Works Director |
| Email Address | pfrady@parkcounty.org |
| Telephone | 406-222-4114 |

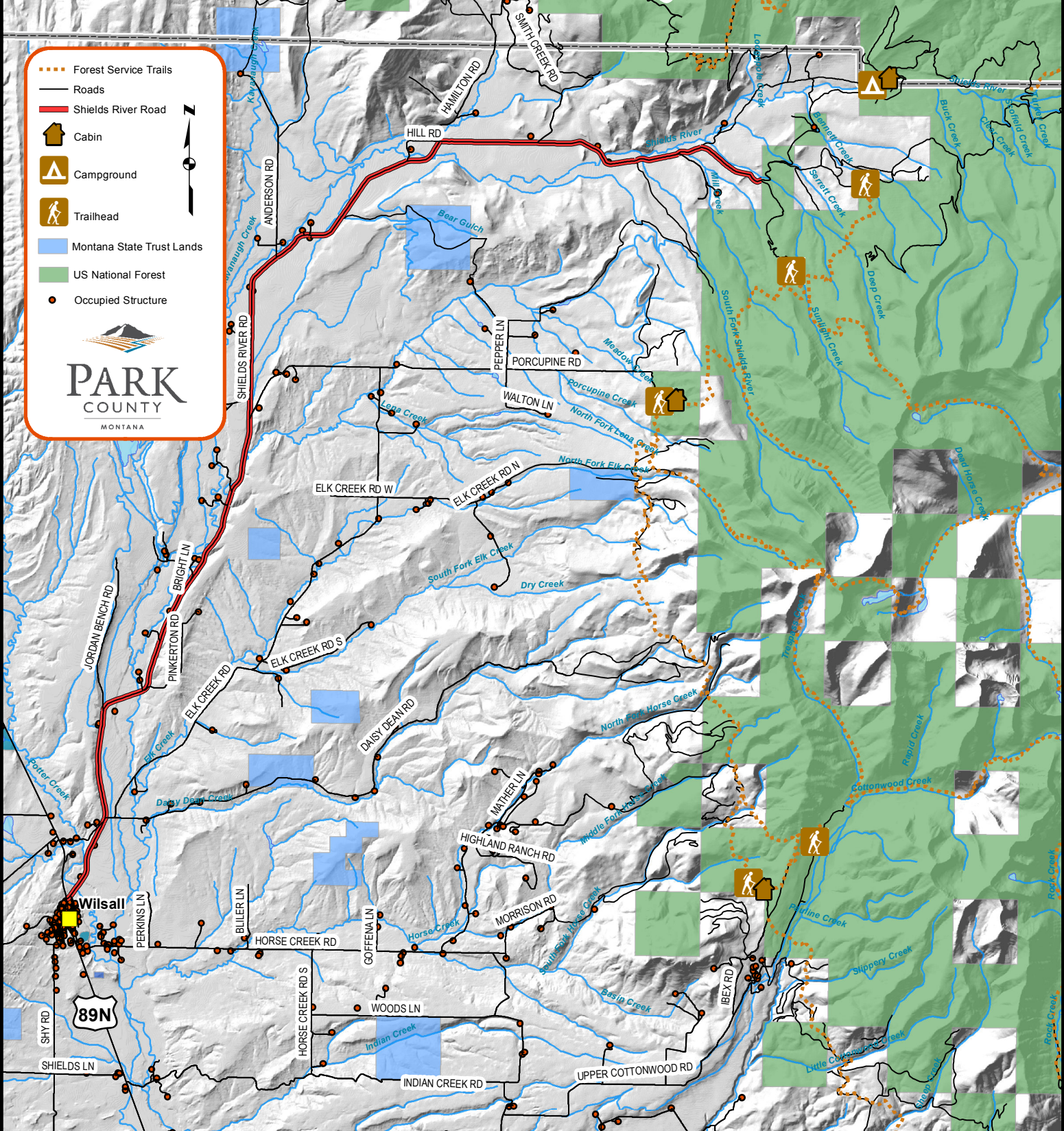
****Signatures are required from BOTH the Federal Land Management Agency being accessed and the State, County, Local, or Tribal Government.
Print this page und sign legibly. After signing, scan to PDF, and attach.*

Project Area Map

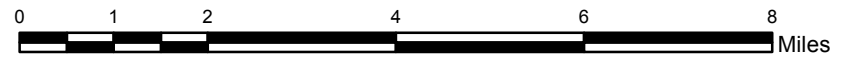
Shields River Road Park County, Montana Preliminary Engineering Planning Project Area Map



- - - - Forest Service Trails
- Roads
- Shields River Road
- Cabin
- Campground
- Trailhead
- Montana State Trust Lands
- US National Forest
- Occupied Structure



This map is for informational purposes only and not for legal, engineering or surveying purposes. Park County assumes no legal responsibility for this information and shall not be liable for any claims or damages arising out of the use of this information.



Project Area Photos



1. Shields River Road: Typical shoulder failure



2. Roadside rock fall at area of hill subsidence



3. Roadway adjacent to River and Hill subsidence requiring roadway reconstruction with stabilization



4. Typical traverse cracks at 5'-15' intervals with intermittent longitudinal cracking



5. Typical area of pothole repair in centerline, travel lanes and shoulder.



6. Typical structure condition: driving surface in poor condition but structurally sound and may require some safety improvements such as impact barriers, etc.

Letters of Support



File Code: 7710

Date: March 23, 2016

Mr. George Fekaris
Transportation Planner
U.S. Department of Transportation
Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

Dear Mr. Fekaris,

As District Ranger of the Yellowstone Ranger District of the Custer Gallatin National Forest, I am writing to convey commitment and support for the Shields River Road (SRR) planning proposal. The proposed planning project will include engineering studies, geotechnical analysis and corridor management planning for the rehabilitation of the 18.5-mile SRR. Preliminary work will include scoping, right-of-way (ROW) evaluation, geotechnical investigation, utility investigation, environmental resource and permitting scanning, and evaluation of construction alternatives to rehabilitate the roadway through future capital improvement projects.

SRR is a minor collector road that begins at the intersection US Highway 89 North, one mile north of the town of Wilsall, Montana. The road continues 18.5 miles in a northeast direction, providing access to over 113,000 acres of CGNF. The SRR corridor includes access to private ranches, homes and cabins; amenities such as trailheads, designated and undesignated dispersed campgrounds; mountain lakes; and, access to small streams. These features create a diverse travel demographic and a variety of vehicle types utilizing the corridor. Currently SRR is used for a variety of outdoor recreation experiences including bicycling, running and walking; bird and wildlife viewing; ATV activities; horseback riding and pack trips; fishing, hiking and camping access; and, winter sports including snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. From the SRR camping sites, historic interpretation and trailheads can be accessed.

Park County is seeing significant growth, as it is a very desirable place to live. In order to sustainably manage this inevitable growth and maintain the health and quality of our communities and our natural environment, it is critical that we engage in forethought and planning for our infrastructure, communities, and transportation systems. The Shields corridor, specifically, leads to the Crazy Mountains and some of the best public lands recreation opportunities in the region. The proposed planning effort will allow our community to both capitalize on, as well as protect these amazing resources.



It is clear that this planning project meets the goals and objectives set forth by the Western Federal Lands Highway Division and I hope you will consider this proposal favorably. Please feel free to contact my office if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex C. Sienkiewicz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alex C. Sienkiewicz
District Ranger, Yellowstone Ranger District
Custer Gallatin National Forest



It is the mission of Park County Rural Fire District #1 to provide, to the best of our capabilities, the highest level of life and property protection services to District #1.

March 18, 2016

Mr. George Fekaris
Transportation Planner
U.S. Department of Transportation
Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

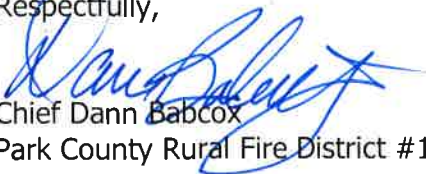
Dear Mr. Fekaris:

I am writing in support of Park County's request for a FLAP grant to fund a Preliminary Engineering Report that will make recommendations about improvements to Shields River Road, which is a popular road leading to Forest Service cabins, multiple trailheads, drainages and parts of the Custer Gallatin National Forest. The proposed planning project will include engineering studies, geotechnical analysis and corridor management planning for the rehabilitation of the 18.5-mile SRR. Preliminary work will include scoping, right-of-way (ROW) evaluation, geotechnical investigation, utility investigation, environmental resource and permitting scanning, and evaluation of construction alternatives to rehabilitate the roadway through future capital improvement projects. This road is the sole access for year-round residents, County personnel, Forest Service personnel and recreationists to the area. The road is also the only ingress/egress into the area when emergency response services are needed.

The primary concern for our agency related to this planning project that would make valid recommendations to improvements on Shields River Road is for saving lives. Emergency service access and the ability to safely evacuate residents served by this road are crucial. Additionally, this project is important to property and natural resource management. The heavily recreated area consists of heavily timbered national forest as well as homes situated in the wildland urban interface. Safe, reliable access for fire resources is required to effectively engage wildfires in this high risk area. The current condition of Shields River Road limits our ability to safely deploy fire resources when fire is on the ground.

I hope you will consider the wide ranging benefits and immediate local need for this project and ask that favorably consider Park County's request.

Respectfully,


Chief Dann Babcox
Park County Rural Fire District #1