

**2013 MONTANA FEDERAL LANDS ACCESS PROGRAM
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT or ENHANCEMENT PROJECT PROPOSAL**
(To be completed jointly by Federal Land Manager and State/County/Local/Tribal Government)

Project Name:	Main Boulder River Road Improvements
Route Name/ Number:	Main Boulder River Road/MT#298
Federal Land(s) Accessed :	Gallatin National Forrest and Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness
Agency(ies) with Title to Project:	Sweet Grass County
Agency(ies) with Maintenance Responsibility:	Sweet Grass County & Park County (See Memorandum of Understanding located in Appendix A)
Proposed Work Summary:	<p>The project will also improve access to the areas served by the Main Boulder Road, including users and employees of the Gallatin National Forest, as well as local residents, by meeting the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve roadway drainage by adding culverts at needed locations, upsizing culverts that are currently undersized and adding or improving roadside ditches. ▪ Construct improved two-lane gravel road with two 10-foot travel lane for a total width of 20 feet. Areas where the 20-foot road width is not achievable will be reduced to a minimum 16-foot width with intervisible turnouts constructed at each end of the narrow areas. ▪ Eliminate safety concerns by realigning sharp S-turns in the horizontal alignment located at the Two-Mile Bridge (MP 4.9). ▪ Replacement of the Two-Mile and Miller Creek Bridges with new two-lane structures that will accommodate the realignment and meet current requirements for bridge width. ▪ Dust abatement from Natural Bridge to Miller Creek Bridge with application of magnesium chloride. ▪ Provide a safe and uniform road surface by resurfacing the existing road with gravel. ▪ Construct entrance kiosk at Main Boulder Ranger Station ▪ Plan, design, purchase, and install interpretive signage at approximately 12 sites selected by U.S. Forest Service ▪ Construct new toilet at the Big Beaver Campground
Primary visitor destinations:	Clydehurst Church Camp, Christikon Church Camp, Camp on the Boulder, Camp Mimanagish, Natural Bridge (part of this site used to be a Montana State Park but now, by mutual agreement, is managed entirely by the Forest Service), Main Boulder Historic Cabin and Museum, 25 Forest Service recreation residences and the Hawley Guest Ranch, as well as the Big Beaver Campground, Aspen Campground, Chippy Park Campground, Hell's Canyon Campground, Hicks Park Campground, 8 Forest Service trailheads and one popular Forest Service recreation rental cabin will each be served by this project.

High use Federal recreation sites and/or Federal economic generators (as determined by Federal Land Management Agency):

The Main Boulder River drainage provides for a multitude of both developed and dispersed recreation activities. According to the Main Boulder Fuel Reduction FEIS, there are 25 recreation residences, four church camps, six developed Forest Service campgrounds, 11 day-use sites, 50 designated dispersed sites, and seven developed trailheads. The drainage contains an approximate 250 private structures. Some of these are year-round residences, some are recreation cabins, and the rest are other types of structures. Recreation activities in the drainage include but are not limited to:

- Hiking
- Structured camp activities for youths and families
- Horseback riding
- Wildlife viewing
- Camping
- Hunting and fishing
- Swimming
- Kayaking (during spring runoff) and floating
- Snowmobile riding
- Recreation residences
- Driving for pleasure
- Exploring historic structures and learning about the area's history

The recreational facilities accessed by the Main Boulder Road are a major source of revenue for the business people that sell the gas, groceries, meals, clothing, souvenirs, and the many other items purchased by these visitors. Recreationist also often contribute to the local economy by hiring one of nearly a dozen local commercial outfitter and guide operations permitted on the NF in this area. Without the road, there are no visitors and the businesses in Big Timber and McLeod that provide these items would suffer from the loss of revenue.

Project Termini (location)		Mile Posts	Latitude	Longitude	Project Length (miles)	6.7
	Begin	4.9	45°29'16.92"	110°13'3.64"		
	End	11.6	45°24'13.59"	110°11'31.08"		
Estimated Total Project Costs		\$6,594,522.00				
Funds Requested from Federal Lands Access Program		\$5,709,537.00				
Required Local Match¹			\$728,985.00*	From:	Sweet Grass & Park Counties – See MOU attached as Appendix A	
Other Funding Contributions to Project²			\$156,000.00	From:	Estimated value of approximately 19,500 yards of surface material donated to project by the U.S. Forest Service from the Miller Pit.	

*The sum of items 1 and 2 is \$884,985.00, which is 13.42% of the Total Project Cost.

Acres of Federal Land accessed by the project:	1,000,000 acres
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Functional Classification of the roadway: (Show official designations of route.)

() National Highway System () Arterial () Major Collector (X) Minor Collector () Local Road

Traffic Volumes	Current		20 year Projections	Basis for projections? (e.g. Transportation plan, population growth rate...)
	Actual Counts	Estimated		
MT Dept of Transportation Estimated Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on Highway for 2009, 2010, and 2011	180	180	180	Based on traffic forecasts stated on page 46 of the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report prepared for Sweet Grass and Park Counties by Beck Consulting, MDT, and FHWA.
Seasonal Average Daily Traffic (peak season) (SADT) on Highway	<i>data not available (DNA)</i>	1200	1200	
% Trucks	DNA	3%	3%	
% Federal Land related	DNA	97%	97%	
Timber (MMBF) or other resource extraction (Winter Operations Only)	5	5	DNA	Data provided by Ed Regan, Resource Manager, RY Logging, which hold the contract for Main Boulder Fuel Reductions Project

NBI Structure Number	Dimensions (Overall Length x Width)	No. of Spans	Bridge Type	NBIS Sufficiency Rating (1-100)
<i>L49102000+02001 (Two Mile Bridge)</i>	108'x14.1'	3	<i>Steel Thru Truss (main span), Timber Stringers (approach spans)</i>	64.9
<i>L49102007+00001 (Miller Creek Bridge)</i>	27'x15.3'	1	<i>Timber</i>	75.2

Problem Statement: What purpose does this roadway 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 road use, safety problems, capacity issues, structural bridge deficiencies, pavement condition, etc.

The Main Boulder River Road is a special and unique roadway located in Sweet Grass and Park Counties, Montana. It is unique in that it provides an unparalleled "cherry stem" vehicle access along a beautiful river that is potentially eligible for Wild and Scenic Designation (Recreation category) almost entirely surrounded by the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness. This exceptional access results in the Main Boulder being a popular destination for those who go into the Wilderness and for those who enjoy recreation along the "cherry-stem" outside the Wilderness. The road's present condition ranges from rough to primitive. The road provides access for seasonal and year-round residents, church camps, year-round recreation, forest management, and emergency response. This road provides the only ingress and egress to the upper half of the Main Boulder drainage. The current condition of the road does not allow for a timely evacuation in the event of an emergency (wildland fire is the largest concern) nor is the road in a condition that the two counties can afford to maintain it.

The Main Boulder River drainage provides for a multitude of both developed and dispersed recreation activities. According to the Main Boulder Fuel Reduction FEIS, there are 25 recreation residences, four church camps, six developed Forest Service campgrounds, 11 day-use sites, 50 designated dispersed sites, and seven developed trailheads. The drainage contains an approximate 250 private structures. Some of these are year-round residences,

some are recreation cabins, and the rest are other types of structures. Recreation activities in the drainage include but are not limited to:

- Hiking
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- Snowmobile riding
- Recreation residences
- Driving for pleasure
- Exploring historic structures and learning about the area's history

The Forest Service estimates that federal recreation facilities in the Main Boulder drainage can accommodate over 1000 people at one time (PAOTs - maximum capacity of the facilities). On average during the summer season (Memorial Day through Labor Day), these sites are 25% occupied. During the weekends sites are often, 75 – 80% occupied with 750 – 800 recreationalist using the Main Boulder Road.

The PAOTs for the sites on the Main Boulder are included in the following table that was prepared for the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report that was completed by the Montana Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration in December 2012. A copy of the Report is included as Appendix B of this application.

Name	Total PAOTs
Developed Campgrounds (6)	280
Designated Dispersed Campgrounds (50)	200
Day Use Sites (11)	307
Permitted Private Recreation Cabins (25)	144
Camp Miminagish (1)	100
TOTAL National Forest PAOTs	1031

In addition to the numbers from the Forest Service, there are three church camps located on private lands—not permitted nor tracked by the Forest Service—Christikon, Clydehurst, and Camp on the Boulder. According to Bob Quam, Director of Christikon, the maximum number of people at one time is 200 including campers and staff. The estimated average number at Christikon is 185. According to the Camp on the Boulder website, the camp has sleeping accommodations for 280 people. Based upon their website, Clydehurst is estimated to have capacity for 200.

A variety of vehicle types ranging from bicycles, motorcycles, and four-wheelers to passenger cars and trucks to school buses to fire apparatus and logging trucks travel the road. There is also some pedestrian, off-highway vehicle (OHV), and stock use along the road. The road provides access to the Gallatin National Forest and the Absaroka Beartooth (AB) Wilderness Area.

In April 2011, Sweet Grass County, Montana and the Gallatin National Forest submitted two Forest Highway Project Proposals to reconstruct the Main Boulder River Road. Phase I of the proposed project begins at Natural Bridge and ends 7.5 miles south of Natural Bridge. Phase II begins 7.5 miles south of Natural Bridge and ends 16.7 miles south of Natural Bridge. The applications were reviewed by the Montana Tri-Agency, which includes representation from the Montana Department of Transportation, USDA Forest Service, and Western Federal Lands. The Tri-Agency combined the two project phases into one project and selected it for a corridor study that produced the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report located in Appendix B.

The corridor planning process was initiated in October 2011 in Big Timber at a meeting between the Sweet Grass and Park County Commissioners, the Forest Service, and Western Federal Lands. The Main Boulder Corridor Study Report (Report) study was prepared using the Montana Department of Transportation's corridor planning process as a guide. The MDT process emphasizes public involvement and early consideration of environmental issues associated with transportation projects.

A series of public meetings were held to gather input for the corridor study. Seasonal and year-round residents, as well as emergency responders identified their concerns and offered suggestions at the various meetings that were held from December 2011 through October 2012. Public input guided the work of the planning team so the proposed recommendations reflect local expectations and are supported by the public and local officials. From these meetings the following goals were identified:

- Increase the safety of residents and visitors using the Main Boulder River Road
- Improve roadway conditions and features such as bridges, alignment, drainage, bottlenecks, and sight distances as practicable.
- Reconstruct the roadway to reduce long-term maintenance costs to the Sweet Grass and Park Counties.
- Maintain the aesthetic character of the corridor to the extent possible while addressing safety and maintenance issues.

Three options were considered and this proposal seeks funding to construct most of the "recommended improvement option," which is described in the Report as Option A. Option A was developed largely in response to local residents that participated in the public comment and public meeting opportunities described above. The majority of local residents engaged in the process continued to advocate for minimal reconstruction that was originally identified during the preparation of the Forest Highway Project Proposals that were submitted in April 2011. The public process is described in detail in Chapter 2 of the Report, which is included with this proposal as Appendix B.

As the primary access route to the Gallatin National Forest, the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, several U.S. Forest Service facilities, and three church camps, the Main Boulder River Road is a high use facility that serves as the sole ingress and egress for the public and firefighters during wildfire suppression efforts in the Boulder Valley. The daily summer populations in the area served by the Main Boulder River Road regularly exceed 3,000 people.

Following a review of the "PASER Manual for Gravel Roads," the County has determined that the roadway would likely score from Poor to Failing for the following:

- Rating of 1 "Failed": Travel is difficult and road may be closed at times. Needs complete rebuilding and/or new culverts.
- and 2 "Poor": Travel at slow speeds (less than 25 mph) is required. Needs additional new aggregate. Major ditch construction and culvert maintenance also required.

The current condition of the roadway is such that frequent users of the roadway recommend that it not be used by low clearance, two-wheel drive vehicles. The Sweet Grass and Park County Commissioners believe that the condition of the road represents a serious safety risk to the people that live, work, and vacation in the Boulder River Valley. The cause of this concern is wildfire and the risk it represents to people in the Main Boulder Drainage. Wildfire is identified as the greatest threat to life and property in Sweet Grass County's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan and in the Sweet Grass County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) both of which are located in Appendix G of this application. The following narrative is from the introduction to the CWPP: "Several areas in the county have an extreme danger of wildland-urban interface fire. The Main Boulder has the highest risk, due to the potential consequences resulting in the loss of life and personal property. The extremely heavy recreational use, the poor transportation system, and the potential for extreme fire behavior place the Main Boulder in the top category." The risk that wildfire represents to life and property in the Main Boulder area and the need to improve the road to facilitate a rapid evacuation of the area is supported by the Main Boulder Fuels Report prepared by the U.S. Forest Service in 2003. The Report concluded, "a wildfire in this area could travel about one mile per hour on surface and about three miles per hour in the crowns under average wind speeds of eight miles per hour. A fire advancing at the estimated speed of three miles per hour could mean that the entire Main Boulder corridor would burn in one day."

In their letter of support for the project (See Appendix F), the Commissioners wrote, “the most important issue is traffic safety due to one way in and one way out.” The Main Boulder Road is the sole source of access for firefighters and emergency services personnel to the Boulder Valley, Gallatin National Forest, and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, which is a major cause of concern for the Forest Service and local DES officials, as well as the Sweet Grass County Commissioners. Sweet Grass County Disaster and Emergency Services/911 Coordinator Brooke Osen stated in her letter of support (See Appendix F) that the project is needed because “the safety of all involved (in the fighting of a wild fire) is at risk due to the condition of the road. With many bottlenecks restricting travel to one-lane, the flow in and out of the Boulder Valley becomes restricted. In a wildfire situation restrictions to travel is not a positive thing and puts many lives at risk.” Osen’s concerns are shared and expressed in letters of support for the project from the Park County Commissioners, U.S. Forest Service, and several other supporters of the project who are convinced that the project is needed to protect lives and property in the Boulder River Valley. These concerns were also expressed during the public meetings held during the corridor study.

The project will serve anglers, hunters, campers, hikers, guests and families of the church camps accessed by the roadway, snowmobilers, logging company employees, Forest Service employees, firefighters, law enforcement, local disaster and emergency services personnel, as well as seasonal and year around residents of the Boulder River Valley.

The project will address the following problematic conditions: 1) failed road surface strewn with boulders, 2) bottlenecks caused by narrow road width, 3) replace bridges that do not meet current standards for width and load rating, 4) deterioration of the road going through wetlands, and 5) limited sight distance. If the proposed project is not funded, Sweet Grass and Park Counties will continue to maintain the road to the best of their ability. However, limited resources and significant needs elsewhere in the County hinder its ability to maintain the road and the physical deficiencies that are already present will become more prominent.

Detailed description of proposed work: Describe the overall design concept, any unusual design elements, design standards, and any work affecting structures (bridges and major culverts). Include widths, surfacing type, earthwork needs, or roadside safety features. Include optimum year work should be done and year work needs to be done no later than.

The goals of the proposed project are the same as the goals described on page 54 of the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report:

1. Increase the safety of residents and visitors using the Main Boulder River Road.
2. Improve roadway conditions and features such as bridges, alignment, drainage, bottlenecks, and sight distances where practicable.
3. Reconstruct the roadway to reduce long-term maintenance costs to the counties.
4. Maintain the aesthetic character of the corridor to the extent possible while addressing safety and maintenance issues.

The proposed scope of work is nearly identical to the Option A that is described as the “recommended improvement option” in the Report. In the Report, Option A is described as “two 10-foot travel lanes from Two Mile Bridge to Fleming Bridge, and one 16-foot lane with inter-visible turnouts from Fleming Bridge to Box Canyon.” This proposal encompasses the work between Two-Mile Bridge and Fleming Bridge. However, at the request of the Forest Service, the County has since added the following elements:

- Fisheries study to determine which culverts will be AOP or Barrier
- Dust abatement from Natural Bridge to Miller Creek Bridge with application of magnesium chloride.
- Construct entrance kiosk at Main Boulder Ranger Station
- Plan, design, purchase, and install interpretive signage at approximately 12 sites selected by U.S. Forest Service
- Construct new toilet at the Big Beaver Campground

Initially, the dust abatement was limited to the 6.7 miles of road between M.P. 4.9 to M.P. 11.6; however, because of increased traffic expected during construction and following the completion of the project, it was decided to include the five miles of road from Natural Bridge to Two-Mile Bridge that was reconstructed in 2012. In addition,

an undetermined number of the interpretive signs, as well as the entrance kiosk request by the Forest Service will be placed on locations outside of the 6.7-mile corridor targeted for reconstruction. With the exception of the kiosk, the exact location where each interpretive sign will be placed has not yet been determined.

The existing roadway width in the proposed project area varies from 16' to 24'. The roadbed is strewn with boulders making travel difficult for non four-wheel drive vehicles. The proposed design of this section includes an improved two-lane gravel road that would consist of two 10-foot lanes for a total width of 20 feet. Areas where the 20-foot road width is not achievable will be reduced to a minimum 16-foot with intervisible turnouts constructed at each of end of the narrow areas. This project includes a surface preparation that crushes the top eight inches of the roadbed and further allows for the use of a pneumatic hammer where larger boulders prohibit the use of linear crushing. Following the roadbed preparation, a twelve-inch layer of road mix will be placed.

The corridor suffers from a lack of proper drainage that contributes to the deterioration of the road. This project proposes to install drainage ditches and replace culverts along the corridor. Erosion protection is also included.

A sharp S-turn in the horizontal alignment located at the Two-Mile Bridge (MP 4.9) is a safety concern and the project proposes to realign this section of road to reduce the curvature. The Two-Mile Bridge will be replaced to accommodate the realignment. In addition to the Two-Mile Bridge, the Miller Creek Bridge will also be replaced with a modern bridge structure and each of the new structures will be designed to accommodate larger vehicles. In addition, each of the proposed bridges would be constructed immediately adjacent to one side of the current structures so that the existing bridges could maintain traffic during construction.

As described in the Report, the proposed project encompasses "areas of specific concern," specifically the Beaver Pond, Chippy Hill, and the Miller Creek Pit. The location known as the Beaver Pond Area from MP 6.0 to MP 6.4 has a reduced road width. Conventional widening is not feasible due to the presence of a talus slope. This project proposes to accommodate widening without affecting the Beaver Pond area by installing a mechanically stabilized earth wall, gaining height, which will result in roadway width increasing without filling any wetlands. Chippy Park Hill has a steep grade that would need to be lessened. This would be done by re-grading the roadway at the top and bottom of the hill. The U.S. Forest Service's Miller Creek Pit is planned to serve as the material source for the project and would need to be approved and treated for weed control prior to use.

Drainage would be improved in this section by installing new culverts to replace damaged ones and re-grading ditches to remove sediment. This section also contains possible spring activities that would need to be intercepted and routed to the ditches.

Right-of-Way Acquisition: Describe which agency (agencies) has title for the project. Describe which agency (agencies) has maintenance responsibilities for the project. Does new ROW need to be acquired? If so, how much and what is the anticipated time (months) to acquire all needed ROW? Will coordination with any railroads be needed? The proposed project will be constructed in existing county ROW and the road is maintained by Sweet Grass County; however, the project will include a boundary reinforcement survey to confirm the ROW through the limits of the project area. The acquisition of a small easement may be necessary for the replacement of the Two-Mile Bridge.

Utilities: Identify utilities in the roadway corridor. Would relocation be needed? Would relocation require reimbursement to the utility owner? What is the estimated cost of reimbursement?

A few locations have been identified where communication and electrical lines may be in conflict with the proposed improvements and it is likely that relocation by the utility companies will be necessary. Buildings along the corridor are served by propane and are not in conflict with the proposed work.

Project is identified within the following (Check all that apply and show plan name):

- State Transportation Plan:
 - Land Management Plan:
 - Regional Transportation Plan:
 - County Transportation System Plan:
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- Tribal Transportation Plan
- Main Boulder Corridor Study Report
- Sweet Grass County Growth Policy
- Sweet Grass County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan
- Sweet Grass County Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- Park County Growth Policy

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

Wetlands

No Yes

Could the proposed project affect this issue?

No Yes

The Main Boulder Corridor Study Report (See Appendix B) used National Wetland Inventory (NWI) data and windshield surveys to evaluate existing conditions within the corridor study area and identify areas where potential impacts may occur. A formal wetland and waters of the U.S. delineation that meets USACE standards would be needed to fully evaluate potential impacts if a roadway improvement project is proposed in the corridor. Based on the roadway improvement recommendations in the corridor study, impacts to waters of the U.S. would most likely occur at each bridge replacement site, at culvert replacement locations on tributary channels, and at the Beaver Pond area where the roadway is very narrow and constrained by steep talus slope to the east and wetlands adjacent to the roadway to the west. Some impacts could also occur in areas where the road is located immediately adjacent to the river. To address potential impacts, all project features should be designed to avoid or minimize impacts to waters of the U.S. the greatest extent practicable.

The Two-Mile and Miller Creek Bridges will be designed to span the active channel and bridge abutments should be located above the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the river to avoid impacts to waters of the U.S. Culverts at smaller channel crossings will be appropriately sized and installed to allow natural streambed material to deposit in the bottom of the culverts and facilitate passage of aquatic organisms. Temporary disturbances will be minimized by working "in the dry" as much as possible. Designs for the Beaver Pond area will consider raising the roadway to gain any needed width and minimize impacts to the adjacent wetland area. In areas where the road is located immediately adjacent to the river, roadway improvements should be designed to shift the road away from the river, if possible, to avoid, or minimize potential impacts.

	<p>Because the proposed project involves the replacement of bridges and culverts as well as other possible impacts to waters of the U.S., a Section 404 permit would most likely be required. The USACE issues different types of permits under the Section 404 permit program depending on the type of activity and the level of impacts. If the total impacts to waters of the U.S. exceeds 0.5 acre, then an Individual Permit would probably be required. An Individual Permit requires additional documentation and agency coordination during the project development process to demonstrate there is no practicable alternative that would have less adverse effects. Any unavoidable impacts to waters of the U.S. will need to be mitigated as required by the USACE and other applicable regulations. Coordination with the USACE should occur early in the project development process to identify potential mitigation sites.</p>
<p>T&E Species</p> <p style="text-align: center;">() No (X) Yes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">() No (X) Yes</p> <p>For the Main Boulder Corridor Study, the FHWA contacted the USFWS to determine the federally threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species that have the potential to occur in the project area and to request preliminary comments on the proposal to improve the Main Boulder River Road. Based on USFWS's response, the federally listed species, and designated critical habitat that occur in Sweet Grass and Park Counties include the threatened Canada lynx (<i>Lynx canadensis</i>), Canada lynx critical habitat, and the threatened grizzly bear (<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>). Federal candidate species wolverine (<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>) and whitebark pine (<i>Pinus albicaulis</i>), also may occur in Sweet Grass and Park Counties.</p> <p>The corridor study area is located within occupied grizzly bear habitat. Grizzly bears are increasing in the area as they continue to populate the ecosystem; black bears are also common residents. Management direction for grizzly bear is provided in Appendix G and H of the <i>Gallatin Forest Plan</i> (1987). Also amended to the Gallatin Forest plan and considered best science for management of grizzly bear is the <i>Forest Plan Amendment for Grizzly Bear Habitat Conservation for the Greater Yellowstone Area National Forests</i> (2006.)</p> <p>The entire National Forest portion of the corridor study area is located within designated lynx critical habitat. Management direction for lynx and lynx critical habitat is</p>

provided in the *Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction* (2007), which is also amended to the *Gallatin Forest Plan* and the *USDI Federal Register 2009 Final Rule* identifying lynx critical habitat.

Issues related to grizzly bears include high potential for bear/human encounters to increase with increased use by Forest users and for increased vehicle collisions resulting in bear mortality. Because the Main Boulder River Road corridor is located in the designated recovery zone or occupied grizzly bear habitat, the USFWS recommended the following measures be incorporated into any future proposed project:

- No construction related activities occur within a half mile of any stream from April 1 through June 30.
- Store all food, toiletries, and other potential bear attractants in bear-proof containers.
- Remove all trash from the project site each day and dispose of trash in a way that is unavailable to bears.
- Do not feed bears.

For federally listed species such as the lynx, actions that would increase traffic volume, speed, and extend use periods on roads that divide critical habitat could reduce connectivity within the landscape for lynx, and could result in increased mortality. Habitat connectivity is an issue of even greater concern within designated critical habitat areas, which includes the entire National Forest portion of the Main Boulder Corridor study area. As such, the USFWS recommended the project be examined for the effects of resulting increases in speed, traffic volume, and potential barriers (e.g., jersey rails) that would be an impediment to lynx movement.

Based on the preliminary recommendations from the corridor study, roadway improvements resulting in substantial increases in speed, traffic volume, and installation of barriers would not be anticipated; however, this cannot be evaluated during this early planning stage. Potential affects to lynx and other threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species would need to be fully evaluated in a biological assessment (BA) and through consultation with the USFWS if a roadway improvement project is proposed in the corridor.

	<p>The USFWS and the Forest Service also provided comments regarding aquatic species and peregrine falcon. For additional information, please refer to Chapter 3 of the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report located in Appendix B of this application.</p>
<p>Other Fish & Wildlife & Habitat <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <i>Please refer to Chapter 3, pages 25 through 33 of the Main Boulder Rod</i></p>
<p>Wildlife Movement Corridors <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>The Main Boulder Corridor Study Report noted that for federally listed species such as the lynx, actions that would increase traffic volume, speed, and extend use periods on roads that divide critical habitat could reduce connectivity within the landscape for lynx, and could result in increased mortality. Habitat connectivity is an issue of even greater concern within designated critical habitat areas, which includes the entire National Forest portion of the Main Boulder Corridor study area. As such, the USFWS recommended the project be examined for the effects of resulting increases in speed, traffic volume, and potential barriers (e.g., jersey rails) that would be an impediment to lynx movement.</p> <p>Based on the preliminary recommendations from the corridor study, roadway improvements resulting in substantial increases in speed, traffic volume, and installation of barriers would not be anticipated; however, this cannot be evaluated during this early planning stage. Potential affects to lynx and other threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species would need to be fully evaluated in a biological assessment (BA) and through consultation with the USFWS if a roadway improvement project is proposed in the corridor.</p>
<p>Wild & Scenic River <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>The Boulder River has not yet been officially classified a wild and scenic river. However, Amendment #12 of the Gallatin Forest Plan (June 1993) mandates that the Boulder River be managed to protect its values for future consideration and potential classification for inclusion into the Wild and Scenic River system. Protection will continue until suitability studies are completed.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>The Two-Mile and Miller Creek bridges will be designed to span the active channel and bridge abutments will be located above the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the river to avoid impacts to waters of the U.S.</p> <p>Culverts at smaller channel crossings will be appropriately sized and installed to allow natural streambed material to deposit in the bottom of the culverts and facilitate passage of aquatic organisms. Temporary disturbances</p>

		will be minimized by working "in the dry" as much as possible.
Non-Attainment Air Quality Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Cultural/Arch/Historic Sites	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>There have been 19 cultural resource inventories conducted in the area. Much of the project area has been covered by these previous inventories, however, there are several creek confluences (the Main Boulder River with Bramble Creek, Ruby Creek, Upside-Down Creek, Shorty Creek, and Speculator Creek) that have not had on-the-ground inventory and are areas where archeological sites are likely to be found.</p> <p>Fifteen historic and prehistoric cultural sites are known in the project area—including the Main Boulder Road, which is a historic site but has not been documented as such.</p> <p>Approximately half of the known sites are outside of the road area. Others are in or immediately adjacent to the road. Field inventory of the creek confluences will be needed before ground disturbing activities can take place.</p> <p>The Main Boulder Road itself will need to be documented as an historic site. The Main Boulder River Ranger Station is listed as potentially eligible on the National Register of Historic Places. Any impacts to the Ranger Station, to other sites determined to be National Register-eligible, or to sites for which National Register eligibility has not been determined will need to be mitigated if the impacts cannot be avoided.</p>
Public Parks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Wildlife Refuge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Hazardous Materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Stream Encroachments	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Stream encroachments are limited to culvert and bridge replacements. Work will likely improve fisheries habitat by reducing movement restrictions.</i></p>

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?

Since only approximately 2% of the corridor study area is in private ownership, there is little opportunity for major changes in population in the drainage itself. According to the Sweet Grass County Commissioners, there is little potential for development in the drainage and none is expected. The Forest Service manages special uses on federally owned lands in the Main Boulder. These uses consist primarily of the 25 recreation residences and one church camp. The Forest Service reports that none of the permit holders has informed them of any plans or

proposals that would alter the usage of facilities under special use permit. Proposed changes to existing permits would undergo thorough review by the Forest Service prior to approval to determine the appropriate level of analysis and documentation.

It is anticipated that the level of recreation use will not markedly change because of improvements to the Main Boulder River Road. While somewhat anecdotal, road conditions in the Boulder have created patterns of use that require less roadway travel with users parking and recreating from earlier (farther north) parking and pull-off areas, and riding horses and ATVs on the roadway itself. Improvement of the road may provide for more traditional access to portions of the drainage that have been less desirable under poor road conditions.

Numerical data to support assumptions that increased recreational use will occur associated with road improvements does not exist. Assumptions about how recreationists behave can be made based upon how recreationists currently use the corridor and public facilities, and trends on a Forest and National basis. No comparable data exists to project what this increase might be. National data sets do project that recreation use on public lands may increase as the percentage of the population in retirement age increases, however participation in outdoor activities, including hunting have dramatically decreased over the past 30 years.

Many of the recreation facilities in the Main Boulder are at or approaching the end of their useful design life, and are no longer meeting accessibility or Forest Service standards. There is a need to take a comprehensive look at the recreation facilities in the Boulder and examine the quality of recreational opportunity currently available, the public need and desire, and fiscal realities of recreation and Forest Management. It is anticipated the Forest Service will take a comprehensive look at recreational facilities and services, it is anticipated that other major recreation enhancements will be recommended during the next phase of the Main Boulder Corridor. Recommendations and projects will be identified through a comprehensive approach to addressing corridor recreational facilities and services. The primary objectives of the study and future enhancements will be focused on improving the recreation experience and specifically addressing improved ADA accessibility, reducing annual operating and deferred maintenance and improving management efficiency sites. Forest Service projects will be added to future phases of the road reconstruction or as standalone investment projects.

Environmental conditions are difficult to project with any degree of certainty. Situations or processes that could affect physical and biological environmental conditions in the Main Boulder drainage include the following:

- Vegetation mortality from mountain pine beetle or other insects and diseases,
- Tree uprooting and mortality from micro-bursts
- One or more major wildland fires,
- Timber harvest—private and/or federal lands,
- Aspen regeneration projects,
- Continued hazard fuel reduction activity on private and federal lands ,
- Changes in status of existing Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive wildlife or plant species,
- Changes in timing and amount of precipitation as a result of climate change resulting in changes to composition of plant and/or wildlife species,
- Prolonged drought, and
- Major flooding, flash flooding.

During the development the Report, no locally specific evidence was found that indicate major changes will occur in the physical, biological, social or economic environments over the planning period for this project.

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.

The project planning team for the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report identified the agencies that would potentially have an interest in the project or knowledge of the project area to contribute to the study. The following agencies were listed; Montana Department of Environmental Quality; Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Montana State Historic Preservation Office; and Montana Department of Transportation; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and specialists from the Gallatin National Forest in addition to those Forest Service employees that were serving on the planning team.

The planning team scheduled and held an agency meeting on February 23, 2012. The Commissioners from both Park and Sweet Grass Counties attended the agency meeting. The first half of the meeting was dedicated to explaining the corridor study, the relationship between the study, and the process to date.

The following list of resources was reviewed to discuss potential issues, opportunities, and information sources:

- aquatic organisms and amphibians,
- wildlife
- wetlands and floodplains,
- air quality and visual resources,
- soils,
- water quality,
- heritage (cultural resources), and
- recreation and wilderness.

Participants agreed to provide identified reference materials and the planning team agreed to communicate with the agency contacts periodically throughout the project to ensure they are current and included in invitations to any future public or other meetings.

Agency specialists were invited on a field review of the road. The field review took place on July 26 and consisted primarily of the planning team and Forest Service specialists. Meeting notes from this field review can be found on the project website.

The resource agencies participated in the corridor study process in the following ways:

- The Gallatin National Forest has been the primary stakeholder agency in this process. Gallatin Forest line and staff served on the planning team, participated in several field reviews, participated in all public meetings, provided language for the draft report, reviewed and provided comments on the draft, and developed an additional option for consideration. Forest Service comments on the draft included evaluating how the improvement options were consistent with the forest plan and potential design considerations and mitigation measures.
- The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) served as a member of the planning team, attended both planning team and public meetings, and provided information for the report. The MDT liaison for the project also assisted in helping to explain the scope of a corridor study and ensuring that the preparation of this study report was consistent with the MDT corridor planning process.
- Fishery and wildlife biologists from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks were invited to, but unable to attend the agency meeting. Both aquatic and terrestrial biologists provided input for the description of existing conditions working with other planning team members from the Forest Service and Western Federal Lands.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) were consulted informally by the Western Federal Lands (WFL) environmental specialist. FWS commented on the project, but not specific options. FWS typically participates in formal consultation during the NEPA process and in cooperation with the appropriate agency landowners.
- The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) participated in the agency meeting explaining how they evaluated impacts to wetlands. USACE provided a list of previous 404 (wetland) permits for the area and requested to be re-engaged once the NEPA process was initiated.

-
- The local District Conservationist of the USDA Natural Resources and Conservation Service was invited to participate in the agency meeting and elected not to attend. Land ownership of the project is largely National Forest and with the exception of some limited grazing, not in agricultural production.
 - The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was invited to participate in the agency meeting and declined to do so. The DEQ typically becomes involved in projects during the NEPA process.
 - The Montana State Historic Preservation Officer was invited to participate in the process and invited to the agency meeting. SHPO, Mark Baumler responded by letter explaining that the office was unable to attend the agency meeting. Baumler explained that the SHPO would look forward to consultation with Federal Highways and the Gallatin National Forest as directed by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36CFR800 as appropriate.

Tribal Coordination

Forest Service archeologist, Marcia Pablo, provided a list of all tribes that the Gallatin National Forest consult with on project activities. Based upon the location of the study area in relation to past interest expressed by various tribes, Ms. Pablo recommended communicating with four tribal entities from the Forest's list for this project. These tribes are the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Crow Tribe, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

The FHWA sent letters to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Crow Tribe - Apsáalooke Nation, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation regarding the corridor study. Federal Highways requested government-to-government consultation regarding any concerns the tribes may have about a potential transportation project in the Main Boulder corridor. FHWA did not receive any responses. Additional coordination will be needed if an improvement project moves forward.

The entire corridor study process was open and transparent. All meetings were posted electronically, e-mail invitations were sent out, a project website was maintained, and newspaper articles were published. Some agencies--based upon their assessment of the study process--simply decided to engage more fully during the subsequent NEPA process. An agency e-mail list was maintained and utilized during the project to keep agency personnel up to date.

During the development of the Report, the public was given multiple opportunities to participate in the study process. The project initiation meeting was held in Big Timber, Montana, on October 25, 2011. One of the agenda items at this initial meeting was how best to involve the public in the study process. The participants at this meeting (the planning team) discussed the number of public meetings that would be needed and who would have an interest in the study and should be invited to attend. Planning team members concurred that it would be appropriate to hold up to four public meetings over the course of 12 months while the corridor study was being developed.

These meetings would consist of a project kick-off meeting in Big Timber in December of 2011, another meeting in Big Timber to report progress in late spring of 2012, a meeting held at a location on the Main Boulder in the summer of 2012 to attract seasonal residents, and a final meeting in Big Timber in the fall of 2012 to present the draft corridor study report. The first public meeting was held in Big Timber on December 7, 2011. A press release with information about the meeting was provided to the Big Timber News and was printed by them. Invitations to the meeting were mailed out using the Forest Service's contact list of all property owners in the drainage. Posters were placed around Big Timber and provided electronically to a Main Boulder resident who maintains an extensive e-mail list of landowners. This individual graciously agreed to forward the invitation. A one-page Fact Sheet about the corridor study was prepared and made available at the meeting and on Sweet Grass County's website.

The first public meeting was structured as an open house. The purposes of the meeting were to explain the corridor study project and to validate the preliminary issue statements. Attendees were greeted, asked to sign in, and provided with a copy of the Fact Sheet. Maps with aerial photos of the project area and flip charts with issue statements were posted on the walls around the room. Open house participants were encouraged to write comments in their own words under the issue statements and to make notations indicating safety and other concerns along the road on the maps. Participants at the open house did validate the preliminary list of issues identified by the planning team and did not identify any additional issues. Thirty individuals attended the

December 7, 2011 public meeting.

The second public meeting was held in Big Timber on May 23, 2012. The primary purpose of this meeting was to update the public on progress with the corridor study to date and ask for input. The May public meeting was advertised in the Sweet Grass County News. E-mail invitations were sent by a Main Boulder resident who informally maintains a mailing list of property owners in the drainage.

A third public meeting was held at the Boulder River Ranch in the Main Boulder drainage. This meeting took place on August 23. The location and date were selected so that it would be convenient for the maximum number of seasonal residents to attend. More than 60 individuals attended this meeting. Participants new to the process were updated on the corridor study. Western Federal Lands presented design concepts based on public input to date. There was robust discussion and some agreement on what the final design should look like. While supporting modest changes to improve safety, most residents favored only minimal improvements to the road. Participants expressed concern over long-term maintenance and costs once the project is completed.

The final public meeting was held in Big Timber on October 2, 2012. The planning team presented the draft report. Members of the public expressed appreciation at having their input considered and incorporated. The public review period was initiated. The plan was posted on the website.

The proposed project is the recommended option selected by local residents that participated in the public comment and public meeting opportunities. The majority of local residents engaged in the process continued to advocate for minimal reconstruction. Further evidence of the public's support for the project are the letters of support that were gathered for the Forest Highway Project proposals that were submitted in 2011 in addition to the letters of support gathered for this proposal that are included in Appendix F of this application.

All meeting notes were available on the project website, www.mainboulderroad.com.

The lead agency for project delivery will be WFLHD. If recommending a different agency be lead, indicate below which agency and provide rationale for recommendation:

Sweet Grass and Park Counties request that Sweet Grass County serve as the lead agency for project delivery. The County is intimately familiar with the deficiencies associated with the Main Boulder Road and the road users, property owners, utility companies, and local environmental agency personnel. The County Engineer is experienced with road and structure design in conformance with Sweet Grass County standards and WFLHD design guidelines. The County and Consultant have significant experience in Federal-aid project grant administration and can efficiently manage the project. Sweet Grass County would request and encourage the active involvement of WFLHD throughout the design, construction, and administration of the proposed project to ensure full compliance with all agency criteria.

The Forest Service requests that Western Federal Lands remain the lead agency.

Total Project Cost Estimate: Fill-in estimates for appropriate items. Add items as needed. **USE CURRENT UNIT PRICES.**

Quantity	Item	Unit Price	Unit	Total
1	Contractor Construction Administration	\$20,000	Lump Sum	\$20,000.00
1	Entrance Kiosk (Main Boulder Ranger Station)	\$30,000	Lump Sum	\$30,000.00
12	Interpretive Signage	\$4,200	12	\$50,400.00
1	Toilet Facility (Big Beaver Campground)	\$25,000	Lump Sum	\$25,000.00
1	Fisheries Study	\$10,000	Lump Sum	\$10,000.00
1	USFS Miller Pit Modifications w/Reclamation	\$30,000	Lump Sum	\$30,000.00
1	Dust Abatement (Magnesium Chloride)	\$15,000	11.6	\$174,000.00
1	Cultural Resources Inventory	\$20,000	Lump Sum	\$20,000.00
6.7	Construction Surveying & Staking	\$15,000	Mile	\$100,500.00
6.7	Traffic Control	\$7,500	Mile	\$50,250.00
6.7	Subgrade Preparation & Roadway Shaping	\$39,000	Mile	\$261,300.00
6.7	Ditch Construction	\$20,000	Mile	\$134,000.00
5.1	Roadway Surfacing (6' depth, 20' Width)	\$70,000	Mile	\$357,000.00
1.6	Roadway Surfacing (6' depth, 16' Width)	\$62,000	Mile	\$99,200.00
38	New Vehicle Turnout	\$5,000	Each	\$190,000.00
6.7	Erosion Control	\$16,000	Mile	\$107,200.00
1	Road Realignment to Improve Poor Sight Distance at Existing Bridge	\$21,000	Lump Sum	\$21,000.00
1	Replace Existing Bridge (M.P. 4.9)	\$800,000	Lump Sum	\$800,000.00
300	Embankment in Place for Wall Approaches	\$20.00	Cubic Yard	\$6,000.00
0.5	Widen Roadway	\$130,000	Mile	\$65,000.00
0.45	Mechanically Stabilized Earth Retaining Wall	\$2,000,000	Mile	\$900,000.00
18	Single Lane Approach Improvements	\$3,000	Each	\$54,000.00
1	Double Lane Approach Improvements	\$5,000	Each	\$5,000.00
1,620	24" Dia. CMP Culvert	\$60.00	Linear Foot	\$97,200.00
60	36" Dia. CMP Culvert	\$100.00	Linear Foot	\$6,000.00
300	36" CMP Arch Culvert	\$160.00	Linear Foot	\$48,000.00
300	48" CMP Arch Culvert	\$200.00	Linear Foot	\$60,000.00
1	Replace Existing Timber Bridge at Miller Creek (S.R. 75.2)	\$300,000	Lump Sum	\$300,000.00
Sub-Total				\$4,021,050.00
	Mobilization (10% of Sub-Total)	\$	Lump sum	\$402,105.00
	Contingencies (30% of Sub-Total)	\$	Lump sum	\$1,206,315.00
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST				<u>\$5,629,470.00</u>
PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING COSTS (Typically 15% of Total Estimated Construction Cost)				<u>\$844,420.50</u>
CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING COSTS (Typically 10% of Total Estimated Construction Cost)				<u>\$120,631.50</u>
RIGHT OF WAY COSTS				<u>\$0.00</u>
OTHER COSTS (such as utility relocation, unique mitigation, etc.)				<u>\$0.00</u>
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS				<u>\$6,594,522.00</u>

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 other eligible Federal funds that will be used to satisfy the match requirements. Describe the timing for providing the required matching funds.)

The Sweet Grass County, Park County, and the U.S. Forest Service will provide matching funds for the project. The Forest Service will contribute approximately 19,500 cubic yards of road mix from the Miller Pit. The estimated value of the material is \$156,000.00

A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between Park and Sweet Grass Counties that describes their mutual commitment to providing their portion of the required matching funds for this project, as well as future efforts to improve the Main Boulder River Road is included as Appendix A of this proposal.

How does the project relate to the following evaluation criteria?

1. SAFETY**Improvement of the Transportation Network for the safety of its users.**

- How many and what type of crashes have occurred on the project site in the last five years?

From January 2006 to December 2010, there were six crashes in the project corridor that resulted in 19 people being injured. Montana Department of Transportation accident data indicates that 15 of the 19 people were injured in an accident involving a bus carrying 38 teenagers attending the Clydehurst Christian Ranch. However, the Billings Gazette reported on July 7, 2009, that 18 people were injured in the bus accident. A copy of the Gazette article is included as Appendix G of this application.

All of these crashes were directly related to roadway conditions, but three were cited for inattentive or careless driving. Contributing circumstances include ruts, holes, bumps, boulders, and high or low shoulders. Four of the six crashes resulted in overturns. One vehicle ran into a fence and one vehicle ran into a tree.

From January 2001 to December 2005, there were 5 crashes. One of these crashes was the result of drugs or alcohol. Road conditions were the primary reason for the other crashes, but citations included driving too fast for conditions, inattentive driving, curve in the roadway, and icy conditions

- Seven of the total eleven crashes occurred from Thursday to Sunday.
 - Eight of the total eleven crashes occurred during daylight hours.
 - Six of the total eleven crashes occurred during the first 7.5 miles.
- 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 shoulders widths, etc?

Crash data locations from MDT's detailed crash list were compiled onto the attached Figures. Locations are approximate.

Location Improvement

- MP 7.0 Roadway surfacing
- MP 8.3 Roadway surfacing
- MP 8.4 Roadway surfacing

It should be noted that the further one travels on the road, the fewer the accidents. Drivers travel as fast as they feel comfortable on the roadway. The existing roadway progressively deteriorates to the south. It is assumed that drivers reduce their speed the further one travels. This reduction in speed averts crashes. Improvements to the roadway without increasing the travel width will maintain a more consistent speed. This will likely provide a reduction in the number and severity of crashes.

- Does the proposed project address potentially unsafe locations such as where recreation use may create traffic conflicts with local or through traffic?

Currently, vehicles travelling in opposite directions result in one vehicle needing to backup to a point that the two vehicles can pass. This project reduces this issue by including vehicle turnouts that allow for bidirectional traffic. Improvements to sight distance at several locations and alignment improvements address unsafe locations.

-
- Does the project address safety for a wide range of users (freight, destination motorists, touring motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, public transportation)?

This project addresses safety concerns for recreational uses and trucks hauling lumber as well as annual maintenance vehicles. Numerous recreational facilities, such as Forest Service trailheads and the church camps, generate limited pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian users on the roadway.

- What are the results/recommendations of any road safety audits conducted for the project? Describe the basis for your information and include reported accidents and anecdotal information.

Crash data information from January 2001 to December 2010 was received from the Montana Department of Transportation. This information was reviewed, and coupled with anecdotal evidence suggested locations for specific improvements. No specific road safety audits have been conducted for the project.

The letters of support included in Appendix F of this application provide several examples of the concern residents of the area have for the condition of the road and the challenge it represents to firefighters and law enforcement. The following quotes for the letters of support illustrate the widely held perception that the current condition of Main Boulder Road is unsafe:

“The most important issue is traffic safety due to one way in and one way out. Currently, there are several bottlenecks that restrict travel to one lane. One can only imagine what would happen in an emergency situation such as an out of control wildfire or traffic accident.”

Sweet Grass County Commissioners

“If the county was faced with a severe wildfire in the Boulder area, safety of all involved is at risk due to the road.”

Brooke Osen
Sweet Grass County DES/911 Coordinator

“Flat tires are more the norm traveling the road due to the sharp rocks that cover the roadway.”

Doug Lowry
Former Fire Chief
Big Timber Volunteer Fire Dept.

“If a major forest fire got started in the valley it would impose a nightmare in getting people safely out of the canyon.”

Doug Lowry
Former Fire Chief
Big Timber Volunteer Fire Dept.

“Proposed improvements in the Main Boulder Road would not only enhance access to our camp for our guests, but also would improve our response capabilities in emergency situations, both medical and (Lord forbid) evacuation to escape forest fire.”

Bob Quam
Pastor/Director
Christikon Lutheran Camp

“The improved roadway will not only provide direct economic benefit during construction, but will serve the region for generations with enhanced roadway safety and access to recreational and tourism amenities.”

Anne Boothe
Economic Development Specialist
Triangle Communications

“The Boulder Road is the only access up the Boulder. It gets a tremendous amount of use by trucks, pickups, and horses being hauled in for wilderness camping and riding. Every spring, maintenance is done on the graveled part of the road, which starts 30 miles south of Big Timber. It is not long until potholes, washboard effect and loose rocks are prevalent again, making the road more dangerous. I strongly recommend improving the Boulder Road above the Natural Bridge for safer travel, for the wellbeing of campers, residents, Bible Camps, guest ranches, and generations to come!”

Jim Holmlund
Sweet Grass County Resident

The concerns expressed in the letters of support submitted with this application are supported by the following quote which is from page 3 of the Sweet Grass County CWPP that is included in Appendix G :

Several areas in the county have an extreme danger of wildland-urban interface fire. The Main Boulder has the highest risk, due to the potential consequences resulting in the loss of life and personal property. The extremely heavy recreational use, the poor transportation system, and the potential for extreme fire behavior place the Main Boulder in the top category.

The concerns expressed in the CWPP represent the concerns of the stakeholder group that prepared the document. The group includes the following local, state and federal entities:

- Big Timber Volunteer Fire Department
 - Sweet Grass County Fire Warden
 - Sweet Grass County Board of County Commissioners
 - Park County Board of County Commissioners
 - Bureau of Land Management – Billings Field Office
 - Gallatin National Forest – Yellowstone Ranger District
 - Northwestern Energy
 - Sweet Grass County Sheriff's Office
 - Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
 - Park Electric Development
 - Triangle Telephone Cooperative
 - Grazing Association
 - Sweet Grass County Conservation District
 - Boulder River Fuels Committee
- Is the project identified in a strategic safety plan?

The project is not specifically mentioned in a strategic safety plan.

2. PRESERVATION

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

- What is the current condition to the existing surfacing? If the surfacing is pavement, what is the Pavement Condition Index (PCI)? How would the project improve the surface condition?

This project is not included in an existing pavement management system. A review of the “PASER Manual for Gravel Roads” indicates that roadway would likely score from Poor to Failing for the following:

- Rating of 1 “Failed”: Travel is difficult and road may be closed at times. Needs complete rebuilding and/or new culverts.
- and 2 “Poor”: Travel at slow speeds (less than 25 mph) is required. Needs additional new aggregate. Major ditch construction and culvert maintenance also required.

-
- Would the proposed project correct a “deficient” bridge identified by the National Bridge Inventory System? What is the bridge’s current Sufficiency Rating?

The “recommended improvement” selected by the individuals and agencies that participated in the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report includes the construct of an improved two-lane gravel road with two 10-foot travel lane for a total width of 20 feet. For safety reasons, the width of the bridges that will be replaced by the proposed project will accommodate two-way traffic.

MP 4.9 Two Mile Bridge: SR =64.9, Usable width = 12.9 feet.
(Includes alignment improvements)

MP 11.4 Miller Creek Bridge: SR 75.2, Usable width = 14.0 feet.

3. RECREATION AND ECONOMIC

Development, utilization, protection and administration of the Federal Land and its resources.

- Describe any high use 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?

The Main Boulder River drainage provides for a multitude of both developed and dispersed recreation activities. According to the Main Boulder Fuel Reduction FEIS, there are 25 recreation residences, four church camps, six developed Forest Service campgrounds, 11 day-use sites, 50 designated dispersed sites, and seven developed trailheads. Recreation activities in the drainage include but are not limited to:

- Hiking
- Structured camp activities for youths and families
- Horseback riding
- Wildlife viewing
- Camping
- Hunting and fishing
- Swimming
- Kayaking (during spring runoff) and floating
- Snowmobile riding
- Recreation residences
- Driving for pleasure
- Exploring historic structures and learning about the area’s history

The Forest Service estimates that federal recreation facilities in the Main Boulder drainage can accommodate over 1000 people at one time (PAOTs - maximum capacity of the facilities). On average during the summer season (Memorial Day through Labor Day) these sites are 25% occupied. During the weekends sites are often 75 – 80% occupied with 750 – 800 recreationalist using the Main Boulder Road.

According to the Forest Service, the Clydehurst Church Camp, Christikon Church Camp, Camp on the Boulder, Camp Mimanagish, Natural Bridge, Main Boulder Historic Cabin and Museum, and the Hawley Guest Ranch have the highest use in the project area. In terms of Federal economic generation, the permit holders of the 25 recreation residences annually pay more than 5% of the fair market value of the Federal land upon which their privately-owned cabins and other improvements are located.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, the “economic generator is not necessarily the individual recreation site, but the National Forest, the Boulder River and their natural qualities. Also, a Main Entry point to the AB Wilderness, which is a huge attractant on a National and International perspective.” She added, it is “worth mentioning that there are nearly a dozen commercial outfitter and guide operations that use the NF in this general area; also a big tourist draw. Hunting, fishing, hiking, and horseback riding are a few of the key activities that come to mind.”

Recreation Enhancements:

The project will improve and enhance recreational access to these venues by addressing the following problematic conditions: 1) failed road surface strewn with boulders, 2) bottlenecks caused by narrow road width, and by 3) replace bridges that do not meet current standards for width. The Main Boulder Corridor Study Report concluded, “seasonal and permanent residents; recreationists using campground and other developed facilities in the drainage; anglers, hunters, hikers and other day users; children and staff at the church camps; and emergency response personnel are all at risk due to the current situation, and will continue to be at risk until improvements are made.”

Recreation enhancements associated with this project in addition to the substantial roadway improvements will include 1.) Improved site and approach signing at recreation sites, 2.) Main Boulder entrance kiosk 3.) Improved ingress and egress recreation site approaches, 4.) Comprehensive education and interpretive plan for the corridor, and 5.) Replacement of an existing failed toilet facility.

The education and interpretive planning for the corridor will greatly improve the public information and education in the Boulder. Our vision for this plan is to create a comprehensive approach to messaging the public about opportunities, uses, hazards, history, and rules and regulations.

It is anticipated that other major recreation enhancements will be recommended during the next phase of the Main Boulder Corridor. Recommendations and projects will be identified through a comprehensive approach to addressing corridor recreational facilities and services. The primary objectives of the study and future enhancements will be focused on improving the recreation experience and specifically addressing improved ADA accessibility, reducing annual operating and deferred maintenance and improving management efficiency sites.

- 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.

The proposed project will improve access to over 1,000,000 acres of the Gallatin and Custer National Forest and the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Area.

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.

- 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?

The Main Boulder River Road is situated south of Big Timber, Montana. The road crosses back and forth between two counties, Sweet Grass and Park Counties, Montana. The road provides access to year-round and seasonal residences, camps, National Forest campgrounds and trails, and the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Area. While the number of year-round residents is limited due to access and distance considerations, summer populations in the drainage--including seasonal residents, attendees at the four camps, and recreationists accessing National Forest campgrounds, recreation residences, the rental cabin and back country--regularly exceed 3,000 people. The recreational facilities accessed by the Main Boulder Road are a major source of revenue for the business people that sell the gas, groceries, meals, clothing, souvenirs, and the many other items purchased by these visitors. Recreationist also often contribute to the local economy by hiring one of nearly a dozen local commercial outfitter and guide operations permitted on the NF in this area. Without the road, there are no visitors and the businesses in Big Timber and McLeod that provide these items would suffer from the loss of revenue.

The proposed improvements to the Main Boulder Road will also improve access for the timber and

agricultural interests that work in the Gallatin National Forest and Boulder River Valley and as a result, support the realization of the following goal and objectives of the Park County Growth Policy (See Appendix G):

Goal 7

To promote and encourage a vibrant healthy economic environment that recognizes existing business and promotes new business that will fit the ecology of the area.

Goal 7 - Objective 1

Support a healthy, natural resource industry.

Goal 7 - Objective 3

Support agricultural activities, with exceptions to industry with high impact on environment.

- 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?

The proposed project is not located on a designated federal, state, or county scenic byway.

4. MOBILITY

Mobility of users and continuity of the transportation network serving the Federal Land and its dependent communities.

- 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?

The following planning documents are related to the proposed project:

1. *Main Boulder Corridor Study Report*
2. *Gallatin National Forest Plan*
3. *Gallatin National Forest Travel Plan*
4. *Sweet Grass County Growth Policy*
5. *Sweet Grass County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan*
6. *Sweet Grass County Community Wildfire Protection Plan*
7. *2009 Sweet Grass County Capital Improvements Plan*
8. *Sweet Grass County Bridge Evaluation and Capital Improvement Plan Report – 2010 Update*
9. *Park County Growth Policy*

This proposed project was identified as the “recommended improvement option” or Option A in the Main Boulder Road Corridor Study Report that was completed for the Sweet Grass and Park County Commissioners in December 2012 by the Beck Consulting, MDT, and FHWA. In addition, portions of the Main Boulder River Road are specifically identified in the Sweet Grass County Capital Improvements Plan as Main Boulder 1 and Main Boulder2 (See Appendix B). Main Boulder 1 is a two-mile section of road that is categorized with a Maintenance Level B, which is a medium priority and the Main Boulder 2 is categorized in the County's CIP as a Maintenance Level D, which is the lowest priority of maintenance.

The proposed project meets the following goals, which were identified in local residents and agency representatives that participated in the development of the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report:

-
1. Increase the safety of residents and visitors using the Main Boulder River Road.
 2. Improve roadway conditions and features such as bridges, alignment, drainage, bottlenecks, and sight distances where practicable.
 3. Reconstruct the roadway to reduce long-term maintenance costs to the counties.
 4. Maintain the aesthetic character of the corridor to the extent possible while addressing safety and maintenance issues.

Without the proposed project, these goals will not be attained and the needs of the people that use the Main Boulder River Road will not be met. From the standpoint of protecting human life, this project is a high priority for the Forest Service, State of Montana, Park County, and Sweet Grass County transportation networks. Primarily because the proposed project area possesses the following characteristics that when combined creates a potentially lethal pairing from which the Main Boulder Road is the only escape:

- 1) It is a popular recreation destination for thousands of people each summer day.
- 2) The Boulder River Drainage has a well-documented history of experiencing fast moving, severe wildfires.

By improving the sole source of access to the Gallatin National Forest and Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, the proposed project fits perfectly with the following goals of the Forest Plan prepared by the U.S. Forest Service, which is located in Appendix G of this application:

Goal 1 - Provide for a broad spectrum of recreation opportunities in a variety of Forest settings.

Goal 10 - Provide additional access to National Forest lands.

Goal 17 - Provide fire protection and use program, which is responsive to land and resource management goals and objectives.

It is generally accepted that the current condition of the Main Boulder Road restricts access to U.S. Forest Service lands to people that do not own four-wheel drive vehicles. The proposed project would remove that restriction and thereby fits Goal 1 and Goal 10 of the Forest Plan.

One of the best ways to protect people from fire is to remove them from the path of a wildfire as quickly as possible. The Sweet Grass County CWPP states, "the Main Boulder has the highest risk, due to the potential consequences resulting in the loss of life and personal property. The extremely heavy recreational use, the poor transportation system, and the potential for extreme fire behavior place the Main Boulder in the top category." The proposed project would significantly upgrade the Main Boulder Road and in doing, help the Forest Service provide fire protection to the users of its facilities.

By improving the Main Boulder Road, which is the sole source of access to the Boulder River Valley, Gallatin National Forest and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness in this area, the proposed project fits the Sweet Grass County Growth Policy in that it will help the county achieve the following goals and objectives:

Economic Development - Objective B

To encourage and support economic development that would create more jobs, enhance community commerce, and improve the quality of life that residents now enjoy.

Public Infrastructure and Services - Goal 2

Provide county infrastructure, which satisfies transportation, utility, and solid waste disposal needs of county residents, business/industries, and visitors in an effective and efficient manner.

Public Infrastructure and Services – Objective C

Improve county road systems to efficiently serve transportation needs within the county.

In addition, the proposed project fits the Sweet Grass County Growth Policy in that it matches the following strategies and actions that are each identified on page 77 of the Policy:

Transportation – Strategy G

Maintain and improve county roads and bridges according to the county’s road and bridge standards and classification ratings.

General Administration of Services – Strategy O

Work with state, local, municipal, and federal agencies when considering improvements or changes to county infrastructure and services.

The project will address the following problematic conditions: 1) failed road surface strewn with boulders, 2) bottlenecks caused by narrow road width, 3) replace bridges that do not meet current standards for width, 4) deterioration of the road going through wetlands, and 5) limited sight distance. If the proposed project is not funded, Sweet Grass County will continue to maintain the road to the best of its ability. However, limited resources and significant needs elsewhere in the County hinder its ability to maintain the road and over time, the physical deficiencies that are already present will become more prominent.

- Does the proposed project connect to a designated route on the Federal Land Management Agency inventory? Are there any future improvements planned on the designated route?

Not applicable to this project

- 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?

The road’s present condition ranges from rough to primitive. The road provides access for seasonal and year-round residents, church camps, year-round recreation, forest management, and emergency response. The road provides the only ingress and egress to the upper half of the Main Boulder drainage. The current condition of the road does not allow for a timely evacuation in the event of an emergency (wildland fire is the largest concern) nor is the road in a condition that Sweet Grass or Park Counties can afford to maintain it.

The first 25.7 miles of the Forest Highway 64 is paved MT Secondary Highway 298. In 2012, Sweet Grass County and Park County received approximately \$280,00 from the Western Montana Resource Advisory Council (RAC) to make the following improvements to a 4.9 mile section of the Main Boulder River Road from Natural Bridge to Two-Mile Bridge:

- Improve drainage – install culverts
- Lay back slopes
- Resurfacing existing road with gravel

The proposed project would be the next phase of the improvement process and would enhance the continuity of the transportation system by rehabilitation 6.7 miles of the road from Two-Mile Bridge to the Fleming Bridge.

Future phases will make improvements to the road from Fleming Bridge to the Fourmile Ranger Station (M.P. 16.7), which consists of a road surface that following a review of the “PASER Manual for Gravel Roads,” the County determined would likely score from Poor to Failing for the following:

- Rating of 1 “Failed”: Travel is difficult and road may be closed at times. Needs complete rebuilding and/or new culverts.

-
- and 2 “Poor”: Travel at slow speeds (less than 25 mph) is required. Needs additional new aggregate. Major ditch construction and culvert maintenance also required.

The contrast between the paved section and recently improved section of the road to the unimproved section could not be more stark and the completion of the proposed project would significantly improve the continuity of the transportation network.

There are no known gaps or links that the proposed project would address.

- Is the road the sole access to the area? Will the proposed project mitigate the potential of the route closing?

The road provides the only ingress and egress to the upper half of the Main Boulder drainage and the proposed project will mitigate the potential of the route closing, by reducing the overall cost of maintaining the road.

- How would the proposed improvements reduce travel time and congestion, increase comfort and convenience for the forest highway user?

The proposed project would reduce travel time and congestion, and increase comfort and convenience for the forest highway user by achieving the following objectives:

- Improve roadway drainage by adding culverts at needed locations, upsizing culverts that are currently undersized and adding or improving roadside ditches.
 - Improve the road to meet minimum county road standards by reshaping and widening the existing road.
 - Eliminate safety concerns by realigning sharp S-turns in the horizontal alignment located at the Two-Mile Bridge (MP 4.9).
 - Replacement of the Two-Mile and Miller Creek Bridges with new structures that will accommodate the realignment and meet current requirements for bridge width.
 - Provide a safe and uniform road surface by resurfacing the existing road with gravel.
- 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?

By improving the road surface, the proposed project will make the areas served by the road more accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and buses. There is no rail service in the project area. The proposed project will not make ADA improvements.

5. 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.

- Describe how the proposed project contributes to the environmental goals and objectives of the Federal Land Management Plan or other applicable land management plan. Would the proposed project require modifications or amendments to these plans?

During the preparation of the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report that identified the proposed project as the “recommended improvement option,” the project planning team identified the agencies that would

potentially have an interest in the project or knowledge of the project area to contribute to the study. The following agencies were listed; Montana Department of Environmental Quality; Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Montana State Historic Preservation Office; and Montana Department of Transportation; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and specialists from the Gallatin National Forest in addition to those Forest Service employees that were serving on the planning team.

The MDT's corridor study process that was used to prepare the Report maximizes integration of information and planning considerations to improve efficiency and final products. The guidance is found in "Montana Business Process to Link Planning Studies and NEPA/MEPA Reviews." The integrated approach to transportation and environmental planning considers the land use system, transportation system, water resources system, and other natural and cultural systems in order to support multiple goals. Existing resource inventories and plans were reviewed and considered in the integrated approach.

The Main Boulder Road Corridor Study incorporated and documented environmental, social, and economic considerations at the earliest point in the transportation planning process. The study document is organized and prepared to support the subsequent environmental analysis process. *Transportation options that have obviously unacceptable environmental consequences (consequences that cannot be adequately mitigated) will not be advanced.*

- How would the project enhance wildlife connectivity and/or aquatic organism passage?

The culverts that will be replaced will either be aquatic barrier or aquatic passage based on the outcome of the fisheries study.

The Main Boulder Corridor Study Report noted that for federally listed species such as the lynx, actions that would increase traffic volume, speed, and extend use periods on roads that divide critical habitat could reduce connectivity within the landscape for lynx, and could result in increased mortality. Habitat connectivity is an issue of even greater concern within designated critical habitat areas, which includes the entire National Forest portion of the Main Boulder Corridor study area. As such, the USFWS recommended the project be examined for the effects of resulting increases in speed, traffic volume, and potential barriers (e.g., jersey rails) that would be an impediment to lynx movement.

Based on the preliminary recommendations from the corridor study, roadway improvements resulting in substantial increases in speed, traffic volume, and installation of barriers would not be anticipated; however, this cannot be evaluated during this early planning stage. Potential affects to lynx and other threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species would need to be fully evaluated in a biological assessment (BA) and through consultation with the USFWS if a roadway improvement project is proposed in the corridor.

- How would the project enhance water quality, riparian and/or wetland function?

The Main Boulder Corridor Study Report (See Appendix A) used National Wetland Inventory (NWI) data and windshield surveys to evaluate existing conditions within the corridor study area and identify areas where potential impacts may occur. A formal wetland and waters of the U.S. delineation that meets USACE standards will be needed to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed project. Based on the roadway improvement recommendations in the corridor study, impacts to waters of the U.S. would most likely occur at the bridge replacement locations on the Boulder River and on Miller Creek, at culvert replacement locations on tributary channels, and at the Beaver Pond area where the roadway is very narrow and constrained by steep talus slope to the east and wetlands adjacent to the roadway to the west. Some impacts could also occur in areas where the road is located immediately adjacent to the river. To address potential impacts, all project features will be designed to avoid or minimize impacts to waters of the U.S. the greatest extent practicable.

The Two-Mile and Miller Creek Bridges will be designed to span the active channel and bridge abutments should be located above the ordinary high water mark of the river to avoid impacts to waters

of the United States. Culverts at smaller channel crossings will be appropriately sized and installed to allow natural streambed material to deposit in the bottom of the culverts and facilitate passage of aquatic organisms. Temporary disturbances will be minimized by working “in the dry” as much as possible. Designs for the Beaver Pond area will consider raising the roadway to gain any needed width and minimize impacts to the adjacent wetland area. In areas where the road is located immediately adjacent to the river, roadway improvements will be designed to shift the road away from the river, if possible, to avoid, or minimize potential impacts.

Because the proposed project involves the replacement of bridges and culverts as well as other possible impacts to waters of the U.S., a Section 404 permit would most likely be required. The USACE issues different types of permits under the Section 404 permit program depending on the type of activity and the level of impacts. If the total impacts to waters of the U.S. exceeds 0.5 acre, then an Individual Permit would probably be required. An Individual Permit requires additional documentation and agency coordination during the project development process to demonstrate there is no practicable alternative that would have less adverse effects. Any unavoidable impacts to waters of the U.S. will need to be mitigated as required by the USACE and other applicable regulations. Coordination with the USACE will occur early in the project development process to identify potential mitigation sites.

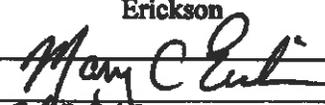
- **Would the project require unique mitigation for impacts?**

Sweet Grass and Park Counties are seeking funds to construct a project that was selected as “recommended improvement” by the individuals and agencies that participated in the Main Boulder Corridor Study Report (See Appendix A). In the Report, the proposed project is identified as Option A. Option A is the improvement option recommended by Federal Highways to move forward into the next phase. The proposed project (Option A) meets the project goals described on page 3, meets the pre-determined screening criteria, and focuses heavily on meeting the concerns of local residents. Local elected officials and members of the public that participated in the development of the Report support this project. Residents’ concerns about preserving the character of the roadway, improving safety, and long-term cost effectiveness are met by the proposed project.

The Forest Service preliminarily supports the project. The proposed project was refined based on input at the public meeting held at the Boulder River Ranch on August 23, 2012. On January 7, 2013, the Sweet Grass and Park County Commissioners met with the representatives of the Forest Service to discuss applying for project funding and it was decided to prepare and submit this application. If funds become available for project implementation, the next step would include completion of the appropriate environmental analysis through the NEPA process. NEPA requires considering a range of alternatives, examination of potential environmental effects, identification of mitigation measures to address the environmental effects, and a formal public input process.

The final NEPA decision is based on additional environmental analysis, formal agency input, historic consultation, and formal public comments may vary from the options in the Report. The final decision will be made at the conclusion of the NEPA process by the appropriate officials.

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

Federal Land Agency(ies):	Gallatin National Forest	State, County, Local, or Tribal Government:	Sweet Grass County
*Federal Land Unit Manager Name:	Forest Supervisor Mary C. Erickson	**Authorized Official:	Commissioner Susan Mosness
Signature:		Signature:	
Date:	2/9/13	Date:	2/8/13
E-Mail:	merickson@fs.fed.us	E-Mail:	sgcommish@itstriangle.com
Telephone:	406.587.6701	Telephone:	406.932.5152
Point of Contact:	Jonathan Kempff, P.E.	Point of Contact:	Susan Mosness
Title:	Forest Engineer	Title:	Commissioner
E-mail:	jckempff@fs.fed.us	E-mail:	sgcommish@itstriangle.com
Telephone:	406.587.6732	Telephone:	406.932.5152

* Unit manager such as Park Superintendent, Forest Supervisor...

** Official authorized to commit agency to project such as MTD District Engineers, County Commissioner, Tribal leader...

Provide a good quality map clearly showing the project location and project termini.

The best available data should be used in completing the project proposal form. Photos should also be included that support the proposal. Email the completed proposal form with all maps, signatures, and photos to: