

FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE (FONPA)

for

Bridge Repair near Launch Facility A-06

Cascade County, Montana

INTRODUCTION

Malmstrom Air Force Base owns and maintains a vehicle bridge that spans Belt Creek near Monarch, Montana. The bridge provides access to the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Launch Facility A-06. During the spring of 2011, high runoff eroded areas of the northern bridge abutment and nearby streambank soils. The bridge also snagged several large trees and additional floating debris that are currently lodged on the upstream side of the bridge. In order to protect the bridge and reduce impacts to Belt Creek, it is necessary to provide repairs and permanent protection of the bridge piers, embankments, and soils in the streambanks and streambeds near the bridge. This document serves as a Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) in support of this proposed action. This FONPA was prepared in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 11988, *Floodplain Management*, as this action proposes to repair the access bridge near Launch Facility A-06 and nearby streambank within the 100-yr floodplain of Belt Creek in Cascade County, Montana.

THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

The following paragraphs describe the Proposed Action and Alternatives.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action includes installation of new object markers on the Belt Creek bridge, painting of the existing bridge railings, filling in voids on existing bridge running planks, installation of concrete armoring on four (northern) bridge piers, installation of concrete wing walls on northern bridge abutment, installation of a rubber water diverter and formation of a drainage swale on the south side bridge approach to prevent runoff and sediment draining onto bridge deck, installation of rip rap pier protection on four (northern) bridge piers, installation of rip rap abutment protection on the north abutment, and the removal of a 2 foot diameter pine tree located approximately 65 feet upstream of the bridge.

The proposed action is limited to the vicinities of Belt Creek. The creek flows in a northerly course for nearly 81 miles before its confluence with the Missouri River two miles downstream of Morony Dam. Belt Creek is paralleled for most of its length by paved highway. Aquatic habitat conditions are somewhat unstable in Belt Creek due to historical road and railroad construction, agriculture, mining, and other land-use activities (MT FWP, 2012). Crews will use a tracked excavator to place rip rap, excavate the south bridge approach for placement of rubber water diverter, and to excavate areas around bridge piers to place grouted rip rap. Construction activities within the streambed will be kept at a minimum and will take place during the lowest water time of the year. Sediment control practices will be used to prevent excessive transportation of disturbed earth and the stream channel will be returned to its preconstruction

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state after completion of the project. This project is planned for the summer of 2012 when Belt Creek is expected to be at its seasonal low flow. It will increase the life of the existing bridge and minimize impacts to Belt Creek.

ALTERNATIVES

Constructing a new bridge was evaluated. However, this option is cost prohibitive with an estimated expense of nearly \$1,000,000. Additionally, this option would have greater impacts on the stream and streambank than the selected alternative.

NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The no-action alternative was also evaluated. This alternative would likely require the bridge to be replaced in the near future, causing greater disturbance to the stream, streambanks and bridge area. The bridge replacement would also be far costlier than implementing the proposed action.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The environmental effects of the Proposed Action and Alternatives are summarized below.

Air Quality. The proposed action would have no significant air impacts.

Water Resources. The proposed action may have a short-term insignificant negative impact to water quality as sediment may be introduced to water resources during a storm event within the construction period and/or during the placement of riprap along the streambank. The long-term impact is expected to be positive by reducing erosion of the streambank and consequential sediment of the stream.

Hazardous Waste. The proposed action would have no significant hazardous waste impacts.

Biological Resources. The proposed action would have no significant biological resources impacts.

There would be no significant **cumulative impacts**.

PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

EO 11988 provides that if a federal government agency proposed to conduct an activity in a 100-yr floodplain it will consider alternatives to the action and modify its actions to the extent feasible to avoid adverse effects or potential harm. Alternatives were considered to minimize impacts to floodplains and other environmental resources.

AFI 32-7064, *Integrated Natural Resources Management*, lists three criteria that must be met for the USAF to construct in a floodplain: (1) evaluate and document the potential effects of such actions through the environmental impact and analysis process; (2) consider alternatives to avoid these effects and incompatible development in the floodplain; and (3) design or modify actions in

order to minimize harm to or within the floodplain. These criteria have been met and no harm is expected to the floodplains as a result of the proposed action. This FONPA satisfies the requirements of AFI 32-7064.

Finding of No Practicable Alternative

Pursuant to EO 11988, and taking the above information into consideration, I find that there is no practicable alternative to this action and that the Proposed Action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to human health and the environment. In order to maintain access to Launch Facility A-06, it is necessary to provide repairs and permanent protection of the bridge and soils in the embankments as well as streambanks and streambeds near the bridge.



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13 Aug 2012

Date