

3/15/2021

To Whom It May Concern:

The Public Land/Water Access Association (PLWA) supports funding through the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) and other funding sources for the reconstruction of the Sun River Bridge located near Pishkun Reservoir in Teton County. PLWA had invested substantial effort and funding to maintaining and restoring a public access route in the vicinity of this bridge. This letter explains that past investment and why PLWA supports the proposed Sun River Bridge reconstruction project.

PLWA is a non-profit statewide organization dedicated to maintaining, restoring, and perpetuating public access to the boundaries of all Montana's public land and waters. For over 35 years, PLWA has been involved in investigating and, if needed, litigating, illegal closures of public access to Montana's public lands and waters.

PLWA's website provides background on PLWA's history and the many cases all over the state where PLWA has fought to open up illegally blocked public access. One of those past cases involved a 15 year effort and numerous court cases, including 5 MT Supreme Court cases, to reopen public access along the Boadle Road. Two intersecting roads were involved in these cases: a portion of Teton County Road # 213, called Boadle Road, and the Sun River Slope Canal Road. In 2000 PLWA became involved in these cases when hunters noticed the road to one of their favorite duck hunting spots, Pishkun Reservoir, was blocked and posted. These roads provide access to Pishkun Lake Wildlife Refuge, the 918,000 acre Rocky Mountain Front Conservation area, Tunnel Lake, and several Montana state sections – some of the wildest public land in the U.S.

PLWA's settlement funds from these court cases were dedicated to the replacement of the Boadle Bridge that connects the Boadle Road to the Sun River Slope Canal Road. Upon completion of the bridge in 2017, Teton County assumed ownership of the bridge and reopened public access to/along Boadle Road. More details on importance of the Boadle Road/Bridge for public recreational access and PLWA's substantial efforts to restore that access are provided on PLWA's website at: <https://plwa.org/issues/boadle-road-teton-county/>

The Sun River Bridge is an important route to many great recreational opportunities in the Augusta/Choteau area. It is located about 10 miles away from the Boadle Bridge. The recreational public using the Boadle Road/Bridge that was subject of PLWA's major 15-year litigation effort also use the Sun River Bridge as access to the extensive and popular public recreational lands along Pishkun and Gibson reservoirs, and the expansive Rocky Mountain Front.

WWW.PLWA.ORG

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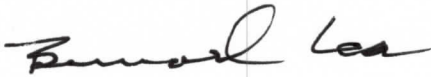
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Given PLWA's past major investment in recreational access near the Pishkun reservoir and the importance of the Sun River Bridge for recreational access to public lands and waters, PLWA urges funding support for reconstruction of the Sun River Bridge. Thank you for consideration of PLWA's input.

Sincerely,



Bernard Lea
President

cc: Al Rollo