

Revised Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan



Prepared by NorthWestern Energy

with assistance by

American Lands and Pinnacle Research & Consulting

December 2016

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Cover Photo: Recreationists enjoy warm fall weather at Kobayashi Beach day use site on Ennis Lake.

NorthWestern Energy recognizes the cooperation and assistance of the USFS, BLM, Montana FWP, Recreational Trails Foundation and other partners in providing photographs for this plan.

Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation
CRP or Plan	Comprehensive Recreation Plan approved by FERC.
DNRC	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FWP	Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NWE	NorthWestern Energy
PURC	Plan Update and Review Committee
River Fund	The Missouri-Madison River Fund
USFS	United States Forest Service

Definitions

Board

See definition for Missouri-Madison River Fund Board of Directors

Corridor

See definition for Missouri-Madison Corridor

Fund

See definition for Missouri-Madison Revolving Fund

Missouri-Madison Corridor or Corridor

An area developed to provide a planning context (for analytical purposes) that includes the Project Area plus a buffer of approximately one mile on either side of the reservoirs and the Missouri and Madison Rivers.

Missouri-Madison Hydroelectric Project 2188

Nine hydropower developments licensed by FERC to NorthWestern Energy for operation on the Missouri and Madison Rivers in Montana. The Project consists of the Hebgen, Madison, Hauser, Holter, Black

Eagle, Rainbow, Cochrane, Ryan, and Morony Developments, with total power generation of 326.9 megawatts.

Missouri-Madison Revolving Fund or Fund

The License-based funds NorthWestern Energy contributes to the River Fund in accordance with the MOU to support the acquisition, development, and annual operation and maintenance of recreation resources associated with the Project Area over the term of the Project 2188 License.

Missouri-Madison River Fund or River Fund

A nonprofit corporation formed to oversee a trust fund to help support the acquisition, development, and annual operation and maintenance of recreation resources for the Project Area.

Missouri-Madison River Fund Board of Directors or River Fund Board or Board

The governing body of the River Fund, consisting of representatives from NorthWestern Energy, state and federal agencies, and participating counties, that oversees and directs investments and allocations of monies from the Fund.

Missouri-Madison River Regions or Regions

For recreation planning and management purposes, the Missouri-Madison Corridor is divided into three regions based on geographic features, public road access, agency jurisdictional boundaries, and recreational use patterns. Descriptions of each region are included below and Appendix A4 contains maps of each Region.

Hebgen-Madison Region

Portion of the Madison River beginning at Hebgen Reservoir and extending to Three Forks, Montana. This region includes Hebgen and Madison reservoirs (also referred to as Ennis Lake or Ennis Reservoir), and that portion of the Madison River beginning at Hebgen Dam and extending to Three Forks, Montana.

Hauser-Holter Region

This region includes Hauser and Holter reservoirs, and that portion of the Missouri River beginning at Three Forks and extending to Holter Dam, excluding the Bureau of Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Project and State of Montana's Toston Project and the river segment between these two projects.

Great Falls Region

This region includes Black Eagle, Rainbow, Cochrane, Ryan and Morony reservoirs, and that portion of the Missouri River beginning at Holter Dam and extending to Fort Benton, Montana.

Project Area

NorthWestern Energy's nine dams and reservoirs on the Missouri and Madison rivers, the river reaches between these dams and reservoirs, and the river reach below Morony Dam to Fort Benton. The Project Area does not include the US Bureau of Reclamation's Canyon Ferry project or the State of Montana's Toston project or the Missouri River between the two projects. For purposes of funding projects under the CRP, the Project Area includes recreation with a direct water-based use or water-enhanced relationship.

Project Boundary

The boundary surrounding each Project 2188 dam and reservoir within which FERC exercises jurisdiction under the Project 2188 License. Generally surrounds the area occupied by each reservoir at its full pool elevation and other lands necessary for project operation.

Project 2188 License Sites

The recreation projects specified in the Missouri-Madison MOU and approved by FERC as part of the Comprehensive Recreation Plan for Project 2188.

Recreation Advisory Groups

Groups formed for each region of the Missouri-Madison project area (Hebgen-Madison, Hauser-Holter, and Great Falls) that represent the interests of the recreating public, special interest groups, and local individuals on concerns and issues related to recreation development and management. Beginning in 2005, these groups have assisted the Regional Working Groups with identifying and prioritizing new projects. Meetings are held with these groups as needed.

Regional Working Groups

Groups comprised of recreation resource managers for state and federal agencies, local planners, and non-governmental organizations who represent the recreating public. Their function is to advise NorthWestern Energy, to participate as partners with license implementation, and to make prioritized recommendations to the River Fund Board concerning recreation resources. These groups were formed for each region of the Missouri-Madison project area (Hebgen-Madison, Hauser-Holter, and Great Falls). Meetings are held semi-annually or as needed.

Regions

See definition for Missouri-Madison River Regions

River Fund

See definition for Missouri-Madison River Fund

River Fund Board

See definition for Missouri-Madison River Fund Board of Directors

Updated Comprehensive Recreation Plan

In 2005, 2010, and again in 2016, updates of the Comprehensive Recreation Plan were completed by NorthWestern Energy and participating agencies, local government and stakeholders. The Plan is used to identify future recreation projects for funding through River Fund and NorthWestern Energy.

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Executive Summary

NorthWestern Energy has prepared this Comprehensive Recreation Plan (CRP or Plan) to help document and fulfill its Project 2188 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license responsibilities for operating its nine hydropower developments (eight hydroelectric-generating facilities and one storage reservoir) on the Missouri and Madison Rivers in Montana. Through a unique collaborative program, NorthWestern Energy and its agency and private partners created the River Fund and are cost sharing to provide recreation opportunities and services in this river corridor well beyond the requirements of the Project 2188 License. Through December 2016, 97 projects have been funded with a total value of nearly \$7.5 million in recreation enhancements within the Missouri-Madison Corridor. Many of these recreation projects are well outside the Project 2188 FERC project boundary and support regional agency and river corridor recreation opportunities beyond the context of NorthWestern Energy's Project 2188 license or associated hydropower operations.

While development and ongoing implementation of the CRP involves coordination and consultation with local, state, and federal agencies, the plan is subject to revision based on input from FERC. It is not the intent of NorthWestern Energy or this plan to set public policy, but instead to work within the existing policies, plans and priorities of the various governmental entities that have management jurisdiction in this river corridor regarding management of recreation resources. Neither is it the intent to replace the existing process of public involvement in the establishment of public plans and land management policies. The public is invited to participate in implementation of the CRP through regional working groups, the existing framework of managing agency plans, and elected officials.

The Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan has two primary purposes:

1. To advise recreation managers and others regarding efficient, responsive, and comprehensive delivery of recreation-related public services for the Missouri-Madison Project Area.
2. To advise the River Fund Board regarding the expenditure of funds to assist public recreation-related projects in the corridor.

Several federal, state, and local agencies as well as private citizens have cooperated in developing the CRP. This public-private partnership has fostered excellent interagency communication and coordination, and has produced efficient use of limited funding for public recreation resources. It is anticipated that the CRP will continue to promote coordinated, efficient and comprehensive delivery of high quality public recreation resources in the river corridor.

The CRP provides a framework to assist NorthWestern Energy, as licensee of nine hydropower developments along the Missouri and Madison Rivers, in meeting or exceeding public recreation needs in the Project Area. NorthWestern Energy has shared responsibilities for supporting recreation management within the Project Area until the Project 2188 License expires in 2040. The CRP is updated at regular intervals (about every five years) in order to assure that recreational resources respond to changes over time and that information contained in the CRP is current.

The CRP helps support the overall consultation and compliance process to meet FERC License requirements for operating the hydropower developments in the Project Area. The Missouri-Madison Project Area extends from Hebgen Reservoir downstream to the town of Fort Benton (excluding the Toston and Canyon Ferry projects and the river segment between those two projects). Resource plans other than the CRP (which only addresses recreation resources) address hydropower operations (river flows and reservoir elevations); energy conservation; the protection, mitigation, and enhancement of

fisheries, wildlife, habitats, water quality, and cultural resources; and the protection of other aspects of environmental quality.

Plan Substance

Recreation managers and others interested in the recreation opportunities and resources within the Project Area can use the CRP to:

- Gain an overall understanding of the recreational resources, issues and trends affecting recreational resources in the Project Area and to consider how specific recreation projects fit within the entire Project Area.
- Understand which entity (NorthWestern Energy or its agency partners) is primarily responsible for ongoing operation and maintenance of key recreation sites, services, and facilities.
- Understand how the CRP will be implemented.
- Guide funding for recreation projects consistent with existing plans adopted by various governmental entities. The CRP does not create mandatory requirements for recreation managers.
- Understand criteria for funding recreation projects with funds from the River Fund (established to fund projects under this CRP) and for NorthWestern Energy matching funds.
- Find information about how specific recreation projects fit within the context of the river corridor and other resources and management plans.
- Know how to apply for project funds from the River Fund.

Key Points

This CRP:

- describes the process for selecting new recreation projects that address specific criteria and are identified at the local level.
- identifies responsibilities for the operation and maintenance of existing sites as a high priority in the Corridor, giving projects of this type greater consideration for funding in the selection process.
- encourages partnerships and collaborative efforts for managing the recreation and other resources in the Corridor.
- is dynamic and can adapt to change, and will be updated at regular intervals.

The CRP Provides a Process for Selecting New Recreation Projects

The CRP contains many of the basic elements of the 1996 Plan, with one major difference. The 1996 Plan (in Volume 6) provided a detailed list and schedule for specific recreation projects that would be developed during the first five years of the License (from 2000 through 2005). With most of those projects now completed, the CRP now provides a process and criteria for projects that support new opportunities and existing amenities for public recreation to be identified and prioritized on an annual basis. The CRP also provides current information regarding recreation resources and management plans in the Corridor.

The Missouri-Madison River Fund provides a mechanism for the governmental agencies responsible for land management within the Project Area, NorthWestern Energy (as licensee), and the general public to work together to identify, prioritize, and fund board-approved projects. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that established the River Fund also created the Recreation Advisory Groups and Regional Working Groups to assure a consultation process that emphasizes the role of local stakeholders

in project identification and prioritization. The MOU also outlines the creation of the River Fund to support the acquisition, development, and annual operation and maintenance of recreation resources associated with the Project Area over the term of the Project 2188 License.

Project Selection Emphasizes Locally Identified Projects and Identifies Funding for Operation and Maintenance as a High Priority

The River Fund Board has authority to allocate River Fund dollars to projects under this plan, but the process leading to their decision is one that develops from local public groups. Potential projects are then identified at the regional level, and move through a process that includes input from Recreation Advisory Groups and Regional Working Groups, as well as the groups and agencies that might implement or sponsor a project, within the three regions of the Project Area: Hebgen-Madison, Hauser-Holter, and Great Falls.

The process advances qualifying projects and winnows out those that do not meet minimum basic criteria. During the CRP updates, operation and maintenance of existing recreation sites was identified as a key priority for future allocations from the River Fund. Members of the public as well as recreation professionals living, working and recreating in each region suggest what is needed in their area and forward projects best meeting those needs through the Recreation Advisory Groups and Regional Working Groups. The regional projects are then considered among projects for the entire corridor by a committee of peers, the Corridor Ranking Committee, consisting of representatives from each public agency and region. The Corridor Ranking Committee prioritizes projects for the entire corridor for consideration of funding. The River Fund Board makes decisions on project funding taking into account the Corridor Ranking Committee's recommendations.

The CRP Encourages Partnerships and Collaboration for Efficient and Effective Recreation Management

NorthWestern Energy, as licensee, has worked to augment benefits for public recreation through numerous partnerships. The concept of partnerships and collaboration for efficient and effective recreation management is woven throughout the 1996 Plan and continued in the updated CRP. Government and non-government organizations have worked together voluntarily to build the River Fund and to pool in-kind resources together for Missouri-Madison recreation projects. This program has resulted in completion of a variety of projects that would not have been possible without the partnerships or that were significantly enhanced through partnerships. The CRP intends to continue building opportunities to share resources among agencies and organizations to benefit recreational opportunities in the Project Area.

The Project 2188 collaborative process provides a long term cost share funding mechanism for recreation projects and continued management, operation and maintenance of recreation sites by existing public recreation managers – U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and local governments. All but two of the originally identified Project 2188 recreation projects have been completed. The licensee owns very few lands on which these recreation sites are located. Accordingly, the majority of recreation sites or services are owned or actively managed by recreation management agencies or local governments. NorthWestern Energy's role is to provide inflation-adjusted cost-share funding (as specified in the MOU) to public land management agencies responsible for management of Project 2188 recreation sites. Site managers may use this funding, at their discretion, for ongoing site operations and maintenance to ensure recreation opportunities, services, and facilities meet the needs of the recreating public.

The CRP Provides Specific Criteria for Project Selection

Basic criteria were established which all proposed projects must meet in order to qualify for further consideration. Projects are then scored based on additional criteria. These two sets of criteria are described below.

Basic Criteria

1. Projects must help meet or exceed requirements of the FERC Project 2188 License.
2. Projects must be in the Missouri-Madison Project Area and located on or near reservoirs for Project 2188 or the Missouri and Madison river reaches.
3. Projects must be consistent with or support management plans in the Project Area.

Scoring Criteria

1. Project is for operation and maintenance of an existing recreation site or an existing Project 2188 license site in the Missouri-Madison Corridor.
2. Project involves collaboration with other agencies or organizations.
3. Project provides a benefit to public recreation in the Project Area and addresses specific issues and goals of the CRP.
4. Project responds to a clearly identified need.
5. Project design options have been considered, estimated, and a preferred design selected.
6. Project supports or protects other resources and is consistent with or supports resource plans in the Project Area.

The CRP is Dynamic Rather than Static

This is a dynamic plan, one that can adapt to change. Project identification is an ongoing process that takes place at semi-annual meetings of the Regional Working Groups. Project scoring and selection is done on an annual basis.

The 1996 Plan identified visitor surveys and surveys of recreation managers as the primary means of obtaining information to assess recreation needs, and these efforts will continue. The survey forms have been revised since 1996 to reflect new and emerging trends and are available at www.missourimadison.com. In addition, an annual visitation study was initiated in 2005 to better understand the volume of visitors and patterns of use at recreation sites.

Basic Conditions, Changes and Trends

- Recreation visitor satisfaction in the Corridor is high, and use continues to increase. There is a good understanding of both the quality and quantity of recreational use throughout the Corridor.
- Since 1992, 30 of the 32 planned recreation projects have been completed in the Corridor, including site upgrades, new site development, RV dump stations, portage routes, boat launches, interpretive displays, trail and trailhead development.
- The population of Montana increased 24 percent between 1990 and 2010, and 33 percent in the Project Area. Total population growth in the six counties through which the Missouri and Madison Rivers pass grew 9 percent faster than the state of Montana overall, on average, from 1990 to 2010, and support close to 63,000 more residents than in 1990.
- 72 percent of land in the Corridor is private, necessitating good public-private partnerships for protecting the resources and character of the Corridor. However, the amount of private land protected by conservation easement has increase by about three percent over the past five years.
- Public lands in the Corridor are managed under more than 25 agency, county, and municipal management plans, requiring coordination and collaboration of all agencies and government entities.

Role of NorthWestern Energy

NorthWestern Energy's shared responsibility and ongoing contribution to public recreation in the Corridor is defined by the Project 2188 License and includes the following:

- Implementation of the CRP in cooperation with land and recreation resource managing agencies to integrate various management plans and provide a regional perspective when addressing needs for public recreation;
- Cooperation with agencies and other partners in the management of Project 2188 recreation projects identified in the 1996 Plan (see Appendix A2);
- Cooperation with agencies and other partners on future projects through matching funds to River Fund grant projects approved by the River Fund Board;
- Implementation of Missouri-Madison visitor satisfaction studies, site use studies, and surveys of recreation managers;
- Coordination of the Regional Working Groups through semi-annual meetings and Recreation Advisory Groups to solicit and discuss recreation management issues;
- Administrative support to the River Fund Board to oversee the CRP and to administer the River Fund;
- On-going funding contributions for annual operation and maintenance of the Project 2188 recreation facilities as provided for in managing agency agreements (see Appendix A2 for current funding levels).

Actions to Implement the CRP

The following actions are performed annually with NorthWestern Energy's leadership and coordination to implement the CRP:

- Recreation Advisory Groups and Regional Working Groups identify projects and review them against standardized grant criteria. Regional Working Groups score grant applications for qualifying projects and forward prioritized recommendations to the Corridor Ranking Committee. See Chapter 2-2.
- The Corridor Ranking Committee reviews the prioritized project applications sent by the Regional Working Groups, considers the projects within the context of the entire Project Area, and forwards a prioritized list of the consolidated regional projects for consideration by the River Fund Board.
- The River Fund Board awards project funds considering recommendations from the Corridor Ranking Committee.

Recreation managers will continue to:

- Provide information via the manager surveys.
- Provide input on and consider results of the visitor studies, manager surveys, and other monitoring information as they plan for recreation projects and in their day-to-day site management.
- Consider input from the recreating public as they plan for recreation projects and in their day-to-day site management in fulfillment of their respective approved plans.
- Participate in Regional Working Groups to advise NorthWestern Energy on CRP implementation.

Chapter 1: Context of the Plan

This chapter describes the context of the Comprehensive Recreation Plan (CRP or Plan). The first section describes the basic purpose and need for the Plan, the second addresses the background of the 1996 Plan, and the third section details the process for updating the Plan. Throughout this document, the CRP submitted to FERC in 1996 and approved in 2002 is referred to as the 1996 Plan. Plan updates completed in 2005, 2010, and 2016 are referred to as the updated Plan or Plan.

Chapter 1-1: Purpose and Need for the Plan

The purpose of this Plan is to provide guidance to planners and decision makers in managing, monitoring, developing, and protecting recreation resources and their interrelationships with the surrounding environment in the Missouri-Madison Project Area (see Figure 1-1.1). Specifically, this CRP has two purposes, which are discussed in greater detail at the end of this section:

1. Advise recreation managers and others regarding efficient, responsive, and comprehensive delivery of recreation-related public services for the Missouri-Madison Project Area.
2. Advise the River Fund Board regarding the expenditure of funds to assist public recreation-related projects in the Project Area.

Implementing the 1996 Plan focused on several major items including:

1. Completing specific recreation improvements at Hebgen, Madison, Hauser, Holter, Rainbow, Cochrane, Ryan and Morony Developments, as well as the Black Eagle Recreation Area, and setting up long-term operations and maintenance funding for specific projects identified in the 1996 Plan.
2. Establishing the Missouri-Madison Revolving Fund to provide long term recreation project funding within the Missouri-Madison Project Area.
3. Monitoring recreation use of the Project Area to determine whether recreation facilities are meeting recreation needs.

The projects identified in the 1996 Plan were completed or were in the process of being completed at the time this Plan was updated in 2005. Visitor surveys conducted between 1994 and 2014 indicate that visitor satisfaction is quite high and has remained so over the past 20 years, and that visitors are generally satisfied with recreation resource conditions. Surprisingly, increases in satisfaction are concurrent with increased visitor use of recreation sites in the Project Area. Though no changes are required in the near term, increased use of recreation sites and shifts in types of recreational use in the future carries with it potential for creating new demands and impacts. Other trends (discussed more in Chapter 3), including population increases and land use changes, may also have an effect on recreation resources in the future.

The Plan advises recreation managers and the River Fund Board, and addresses the need for:

1. A process for identifying and prioritizing acquisition, development, and annual operation and maintenance of recreation resources associated with the Project Area.
2. A process to apply for and to make decisions on recreation project funding.
3. An approach for monitoring and evaluating recreation needs and facilities.

Advising Recreation Managers

One of the fundamental purposes of the Plan is to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of recreation project efforts and beneficial results by facilitating collaboration among NorthWestern Energy and the many federal, state, and local partners. Implementation of the 1996 Plan led the way in this regard. NorthWestern Energy, as licensee, has shared responsibility for plan implementation and has actively worked to leverage results through partnerships. Government and non-government organizations have worked together voluntarily to build the Revolving Fund and to pool resources together on a variety of projects. The resulting recreation projects were made possible or significantly enhanced through these partnerships. The Plan intends to continue building partnerships and opportunities to share resources among agencies and organizations to benefit public recreation opportunities in the Project Area.

Another fundamental purpose of the Plan is to provide an overall context for water-based and water-enhanced recreation projects in the Project Area. This overall context includes the inter-relationships among the various recreation activities and needs; relationships with other resources, such as water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources; and the parameters set by existing plans and management policies. It is not the intent of this plan to set public policy regarding recreation resources in the Corridor but rather to work within the existing priorities of the various governmental entities (see Chapter 3-3 for descriptions of government plans in effect at the time of this Plan update). Management decisions will continue to be made by existing managing agencies and recreation providers.

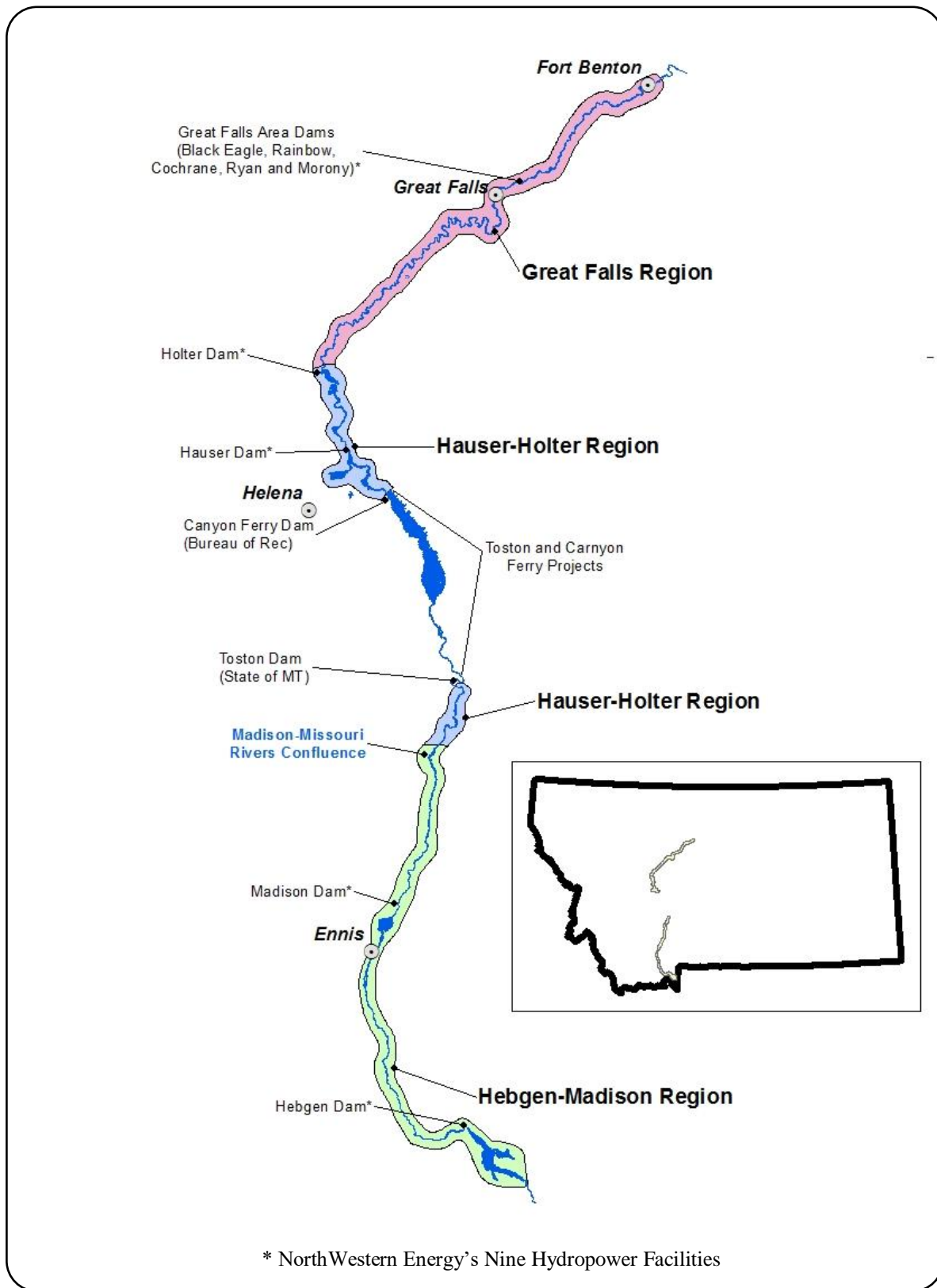
Advising the River Fund Board

This Plan provides a framework for decision-making on allocations of earnings and principal from the River Fund. The River Fund Board manages and allocates monies from the River Fund. The River Fund Board consists of representatives from NorthWestern Energy and the federal, state, and local governments involved in recreation and land management in the Project Area, as well as representation from the general public.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

NorthWestern Energy has developed this Plan as partial fulfillment of its requirements under Article 426 of the Project 2188 License. FERC completed its NEPA analysis prior to issuing the License with release of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements for the Missouri-Madison Hydroelectric Project. Federal and state agencies supplement these documents with project- and site-specific analyses for NEPA and MEPA compliance as individual projects are proposed.

Figure 1-1.1: Missouri-Madison Corridor, Designated Regions, and Hydropower Facilities



Chapter 1-2: Background of the Plan

This section provides background on the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan (CRP or Plan). It discusses the history of Project 2188 licensing, actions taken under the Plan, FERC’s involvement, and responsibilities under that Plan for NorthWestern Energy and other parties. The latter sections focus on the River Fund funding mechanisms and summarize the work completed under the Plan through 2016.

History of Project 2188 Licensing

The CRP is one part of an overall process to meet federal license requirements for operating the hydropower developments in the Project Area. The project consists of nine hydropower developments located on the Madison and Missouri Rivers in Gallatin, Madison, Lewis and Clark, and Cascade Counties in Montana. The Project Area extends from Hebgen Reservoir downstream to the town of Fort Benton (excluding the Toston and Canyon Ferry projects).

Development Name	Production (Megawatts)	Surface Acres	Location
Hebgen	Storage	13,000	Madison River mile 103
Madison	10.9	3,900	Madison River mile 40
Hauser	21.0	5,970 including Lake Helena	Missouri River mile 2,237
Holter	50.0	4,550	Missouri River mile 2,211
Black Eagle	18.0	402	Missouri River mile 2,118
Rainbow	60.0	126	Missouri River mile 2,115
Cochrane	60.0	249	Missouri River mile 2,111
Ryan	60.0	168	Missouri River mile 2,110
Morony	49.0	304	Missouri River mile 2,105

Eight of the nine hydropower developments were constructed between 1906 and 1930. The original license was issued in 1956 when the licensee sought authorization to add the ninth development (Cochrane). In November 1992, the licensee filed an application for a new hydropower operating license. The original license expired on November 30, 1994, and the project was operated pursuant to annual licenses until the current Project 2188 license was issued by FERC in September of 2000 for a 40-year period (2000-2040). With FERC approval, the license and developments for Project 2188 were transferred to NorthWestern Energy on November 17, 2014.

When acting on license applications, FERC must give equal consideration to power development, energy conservation, the protection, mitigation, and enhancement of water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources, the preservation of other aspects of environmental quality, and public recreational opportunities. As part of license compliance, the licensee submitted a number of plans to address these considerations. The CRP addresses only the recreational aspects of license compliance.

Article 426 of the 2188 License required the licensee to file a Comprehensive Recreation Plan for managing recreational resources at the Project. That Plan was submitted in 1996 with a supplemental filing in 2001, and was approved by FERC in 2002. The Plan included specific provisions for recreational development at the nine Project Developments and a description of the entity responsible for ongoing operation and maintenance of each of the facilities (see Appendix A2). While FERC specified an eight-year interval for completion and filing of Plan updates – which was ultimately changed to six years in 2003 – the Missouri Madison Memorandum of Understanding specified the first plan update to

occur in 2006 to develop a process for funding recreation site improvements beyond the first five years of the License (see Missouri-Madison Memorandum of Understanding detail later in this section).

In approving the 1996 Plan, FERC put a strong emphasis on not only protecting recreational opportunities, but also on ensuring responsible long-term management of the developments and improvements over the 40-year term of the license. FERC also required projects to be consistent with state and federal plans relevant to the Project Area.

The 1996 Plan and Updates

The 1996 Plan consists of the following seven volumes:

- Volume 1 – Technical Report;
- Volume 2 – Indicators, Desired Conditions and Update Procedures;
- Volume 3 – Computer Manual;
- Volume 4 (three parts)
 - (1 of 3) - Photo Inventory and Site Information (Hebgen/Madison Region);
 - (2 of 3) - Photo Inventory and Site Information (Hauser/Holter Region);
 - (3 of 3) - Photo Inventory and Site Information (Great Falls Region);
- Volume 5 – Recreation Studies (1994-1995 Visitors Study);
- Volume 6 – Proposed Recreation Improvements; and
- Volume 7 – Shoreline Management Planning.

The first five volumes of the Plan were filed with FERC in 1996 as the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan. Remaining Volumes 6 and 7 were filed in 2001 and 2002 (see Table 1-2.2). Prior to filing Volumes 6 and 7 with FERC, the licensee consulted with agencies and other parties to revise and update Plan information. For Volume 6, the licensee and agencies reviewed the status and scope of recreation projects initially proposed in 1992 with the Project 2188 License Application, and incorporated updated information on proposed projects. For Volume 7, the licensee consulted with the Gallatin National Forest (Hebgen Lake Ranger District) and private landowners, cabin owners and other interested parties to develop information for the Hebgen Shoreline Plan.

1989	Licensee initiates re-licensing for Project 2188
1992	Licensee files application to re-license Project 2188 with FERC
1993-1996	Plan volumes 1 through 5 developed
1996	Licensee files Plan volumes 1 through 5 with FERC
September 2000	FERC issues new license for Project 2188 and Licensee begins Plan implementation
2001 and 2002	Licensee files Plan volumes 6 and 7 with FERC
June 2002	FERC approves Plan
2004	Licensee completes draft Plan update
February 2005	Licensee files updated Plan with FERC
November 2010	Licensee completes five-year update of Plan.
December 2016	NorthWestern Energy completes Plan update following manager update and review in 2015 and additional tasks related to transfer of 2188 License to NorthWestern Energy.

For Plan updates in 2005, 2010, and 2016, the licensee worked with agency recreation managers from the Regional Working Groups to review and update information in the Plan. This updated Plan provides a fresh perspective on issues, vision, and goals for recreation management in the Missouri-Madison Corridor, identifies the process for long-term funding of recreation improvements in the Corridor, and provides a description of current recreational, land use, and population trends. Once updated, the Plan supplements the 1996 Plan (Table 1-2.3).

Table 1-2.3: Update Procedures for Key Elements of the 1996 Plan	
Volume 1: Technical Report	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) management frameworks were updated and are included in Appendix D.
Volume 2: Indicators, Desired Conditions, and Update Procedures	Indicators and desired conditions related to recreation were updated and incorporated into Appendix D.
Volume 3: Detail computer manual	Retired. Computer technology changes too rapidly to include an up-to-date manual.
Volume 4: Photo inventory	Archived.
Volume 5: Recreation studies	Updated and current information is included in Appendix B.
Volume 6: Recreation improvements planned for 2000-2005.	Archived. Current documentation included in Appendix A2.
Volume 7: Hebgen Shoreline Plan	Included as Appendix F.

The Role of NorthWestern Energy

As licensee of Project 2188, NorthWestern Energy administers the Plan in partial fulfillment of its responsibility to the recreating public for operating its nine reservoirs and dams in the Corridor. Under the 2188 License, NorthWestern Energy cooperates with federal and state agencies and six counties to support the management of public recreation resources along the Missouri and Madison Rivers (see Appendix A3 for maps of recreation sites in the Corridor). NorthWestern Energy’s responsibility and contribution to public recreation in the Corridor is defined by the following:

- Implementation of the Plan in cooperation with recreation resource managing agencies and governmental entities to integrate various management plans and provide a regional perspective when addressing needs for public recreation;
- Cooperation with agencies and other partners in the completion of recreation projects specified in the 1996 Plan (see Table 1-2.4 and Appendix A2) and on future projects as determined by the Plan and the Board (see Figure 1-2.1 NorthWestern Energy Matching Contributions);
- Implementation of Missouri-Madison recreation visitor studies, visitation studies, and surveys of recreation managers;
- Coordination of Regional Working Groups and Recreation Advisory Groups to solicit input and discuss recreation management issues;
- Coordination of a River Fund Board to oversee the Plan and to administer the Revolving Fund;
- Funding of annual operation and maintenance for recreation facilities over the term of the License totaling \$411,591 in 2016 as specified in the Plan (see Appendix A2).
- Coordination with public agencies and local government regarding fisheries, water quality and wildlife management as related to License responsibilities. NorthWestern Energy has established

interagency Technical Advisory Committees and created a series of plans with a Project Area coordination function similar in purpose to the CRP.

The resource plans are as follows:

- Madison and Missouri River and Reservoir Shoreline Erosion Monitoring Plan
- Madison River Pulse Flow Protocol Plan
- Madison River Flushing Flow Plan
- Madison and Missouri River Cultural Resource Programmatic Agreement
- Flow restoration plans for Madison, Hauser, Holter and Morony Dams
- Fisheries and Aquatic Habitat Plans for the Madison and Missouri Rivers
- Madison and Missouri River Water Quality Monitoring Plan
- Madison and Missouri River NorthWestern Energy Hydropower Operations Plan

Table 1-2.4 Recreation Projects Initially Planned for Years 2000-2005					
Hebgen Development	Madison Development	Hauser Development	Holter Development	Great Falls Area Developments	River Access Sites
Fisherman's Point	Clute's Landing	Devil's Elbow Campground	Meriwether Picnic Area	Canoe Portage Signage at Oddfellows Park*	North Park Access Site
Lonesomehurst Boat Ramp & Dock	Upper Bear Trap Canyon	Clark's Bay Day Use Area	Coulter Campground	Black Eagle Memorial Island	Cottonwood Grove FAS
Rainbow Point Boat Ramp & Dock	Kobayashi Beach Day Use Area	Hauser Area RV Dump Station	Beartooth Landing Campground	Rainbow Reservoir Boat Launch	Widow Coulee FAS
Hebgen Dam Day Use Area	Meadow Lake FAS	White Sandy Beach	Log Gulch Campground	River's Edge Trail	Fort Benton Canoe Launch and Campground
Hebgen RV Dump Station	Fall Creek Access Site (Interpretive Area)	Hauser Dam Access	Departure Point Day Use Area	Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center*	Fort Benton Motorboat Launch
Lyon's Bridge Access Site*	Warm Springs Creek Access Site*	Causeway Fishing Pier	Holter Lake Campground	Rainbow and Lewis & Clark Overlooks	
			Holter Dam Campground	Crooked Falls Overlook	
			Holter Dam Portage	North Shore Conservation Easement	
			Holter Area RV Dump Station	Rainbow-Morony Pedestrian/Bike Trail	
				Sulfur Spring Trailhead	
				Cochrane Dam crossing	
				Ryan Island Day Use Area	
				Carter Ferry FAS	

* These projects were completed prior to issuance of the new License in 2000. The licensee contributed \$1.1 million to help fund the USFS Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in 1997.

Primary Plan Participants

The involvement of NorthWestern Energy, and local, state, and federal agencies, is a key component in developing and revising the Plan. This coordinated and collaborative effort continues to be a key component in its implementation. As part of its license responsibility, NorthWestern Energy seeks recreation project partners for meeting recreation needs of the public. Responsibility for recreation at the Project 2188 reservoirs and along the Missouri and Madison rivers is shared as follows:

- NorthWestern Energy shares responsibility for providing public recreation opportunities under the FERC Project 2188 License for nine dams on the Missouri and Madison rivers.
- The BLM and USFS manage large amounts of public land along the Corridor and also have responsibilities for recreation management.
- The FWP acquires, owns and manages access sites for public recreation on the 2188 Project reservoirs and the Missouri and Madison rivers.
- The six counties through which the Corridor passes, and towns and cities adjacent to the 2188 Project reservoirs and rivers, have property and recreation interests within their jurisdictional areas.

Other Plan Participants

In addition to input and guidance from local governmental entities and state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the public are also key participants in developing and revising the Plan. Therefore, opportunities were created and continue to exist for individuals and groups to participate and advise NorthWestern Energy on issues and concerns that affect recreation management in the Project Area. These opportunities for public and agency participation include the following:

- Recreation Advisory Groups for the three regions of the Missouri-Madison Project Area. The three regions are:
 - Hebgen-Madison Region including Hebgen and Madison reservoirs and Madison River extending to Three Forks, Montana;
 - Hauser-Holter Region between Three Forks and Holter Dam, including Hauser and Holter reservoirs, but excluding the BOR Canyon Ferry Project and the State of Montana Toston Project;
 - Great Falls Region between Holter Dam and Fort Benton, Montana, including Black Eagle, Rainbow, Cochrane, Ryan and Morony reservoirs and the Missouri River;
- Regional Working Groups; and
- The River Fund Board of Directors.

Recreation Advisory Groups

Three groups representing the interests of the recreating public, special interest groups, and local individuals were formed during re-licensing of the Missouri-Madison Project in the early 1990s to advise the licensee on concerns and issues related to recreation development on project reservoirs. Group membership and meetings were open to any interested individual, business or organization, and members of the Recreation Advisory Groups. The groups assisted with Plan development in the mid-1990s, identification of recreation projects for early pre-license implementation and in Plan implementation following issuance of the License in September 2000. While membership of these groups has evolved, the public continues to advise NorthWestern Energy on Plan implementation by providing input on public recreation to recreation managers, members of Regional Working Groups, or to NorthWestern Energy directly through Recreation Advisory meetings or contact avenues at www.missourimadison.com.

Regional Working Groups

Three groups representing local governments and state and federal resource agencies were formed during re-licensing of the Missouri-Madison Project. Members of the Regional Working Groups include recreation resource managers for state and federal agencies, local planners, and non-governmental organizations who represent the recreating public. Group membership is open to all agencies and organizations interested in recreation planning in the Corridor. Group members actively participated in Plan development in the mid-1990s and made recommendations to the licensee for early pre-license implementation of recreation projects (see Table 1-2.4 and Appendix A2). Group members continue to meet twice a year to discuss recreation management concerns in the Project Area and to advise NorthWestern Energy and the River Fund Board on Plan implementation. Members of the Regional Working Groups change over time as individuals take new positions and are replaced. Members of the 2016 Regional Working Groups are listed in Table 1-2.5.

Table 1-2.5: 2016 Regional Working Group Member List for Project 2188

Hebgen-Madison Regional Working Group	Hauser-Holter Regional Working Group	Great Falls Area Regional Working Group
Jason Brey District Ranger Hebgen Lake Ranger District Custer-Gallatin National Forest	Jaime Tompkins Outdoor Recreation Planner Butte Field Office Bureau of Land Management	Jason Pignanelli Giant Springs State Park Manager Montana State Parks
Brian Thompson Natural Resource Specialist Hebgen Lake Ranger District Custer-Gallatin National Forest	Roy Barkley Helena Ranger District Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest	John Taillie Parks Manager, Region 4 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Chris McGrath Outdoor Recreation Planner Dillon Field Office Bureau of Land Management	Rory Gluekert Helena Ranger District Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest	Joe Patrella Director City of Great Falls Park and Rec
Cheryl Morris River Recreation Manager Region 3, MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Gabe Witham Helena Ranger District Helena-Lewis & Clark National Forest	John Juras Recreational Trails Foundation
Brian Lee Madison Ranger District Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	Craig Puchat Helena Area Park Manager Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Vicki Robinson FAS Coordinator, Region 4 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Charity Fechter County Planner Madison County Planning Office	Allan Kuser FAS Coordinator Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Steffen Janikula Trail Manager City of Great Falls
Jon Jourdonnais Hydropower License Compliance NorthWestern Energy	Dave Andrus Missouri Headwaters State Park Montana State Parks	Bob Pasha Commissioner Chouteau County
Kim Bergstrom Recreation Planner Pinnacle Research & Consulting for American Lands	Matt Marcinek Parks Manager, Region 3 Montana State Parks	Shirley Embleton Chairperson Chouteau County Fair Board
	Jon Jourdonnais Hydropower License Compliance NorthWestern Energy	Connie Jacobs Director Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center Bureau of Land Management
	Kim Bergstrom Recreation Planner Pinnacle Research & Consulting for American Lands	Jeff LaRock Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center
		Jon Jourdonnais Hydropower License Compliance NorthWestern Energy
		Kim Bergstrom Recreation Planner Pinnacle Research & Consulting for American Lands

Visit www.missourimadison.com for a current list of Regional Working Group members.

Funding Mechanisms for Recreation Management

As part of re-licensing efforts that occurred between 1989 and 1992 for the Missouri-Madison Hydroelectric Project, the licensee worked with federal and state agencies, local governments and the public to identify new and redeveloped recreation projects that would address the growth in demand for public recreation in the Project Area. The re-licensing effort recognized that funding available for public recreation is often limited. The licensee proposed that the estimated \$10 million cost for acquisition and development of the new and redeveloped recreation properties be shared as follows:

- IF the licensee contributed up to \$5 million for the new properties and developments;
- AND the public agencies contributed up to \$5 million for acquisition and development;
- THEN the licensee placed in a Revolving Fund \$5 million as a contribution to assist with future operation and maintenance, development, and acquisition of recreation resources after the initial 5-year development period following issuance of the new Project 2188 License.
- FURTHER, and on an ongoing basis for the duration of the license, the licensee agreed to match agency funding contributed to projects approved by the River Fund Board (see section on post-2005 NorthWestern Energy match of agency contributions).

This public/private funding partnership has been and continues to be enthusiastically supported by NorthWestern Energy, federal and state agencies, as well as local governments and other partners within the Project Area. The efforts resulted in funding for projects identified in the 1996 Plan, as well as 97 recreation projects through the River Fund grant process in the Project Area between fiscal years 2007 and 2017 (See Chapter 2-6 and Appendix A-2).

The Missouri-Madison Memorandum of Understanding

To establish the funding support and decision-making process for Plan implementation, state and federal agencies and county governments in the Project Area, together with the licensee, developed and signed the Missouri-Madison Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1992 (see Appendix E). The USFS, BLM, FWP, BOR; Gallatin, Madison, Broadwater, Lewis and Clark, Cascade and Chouteau counties; and the licensee signed the MOU.

The MOU specifies how monies for a Revolving Fund (Fund) were generated as recreation projects were completed over the first five years of the License, and describes how monies will be expended from the Fund over the remaining 35 years of the License. The Fund embodies a public-private partnership where NorthWestern Energy and the cooperating parties work together to address and finance public recreation needs in the Project Area over the term of the License.

The signatories to the MOU established a goal of \$5,000,000 in principal for the Fund following completion of the projects required by the License. That goal was reached in January 2005.

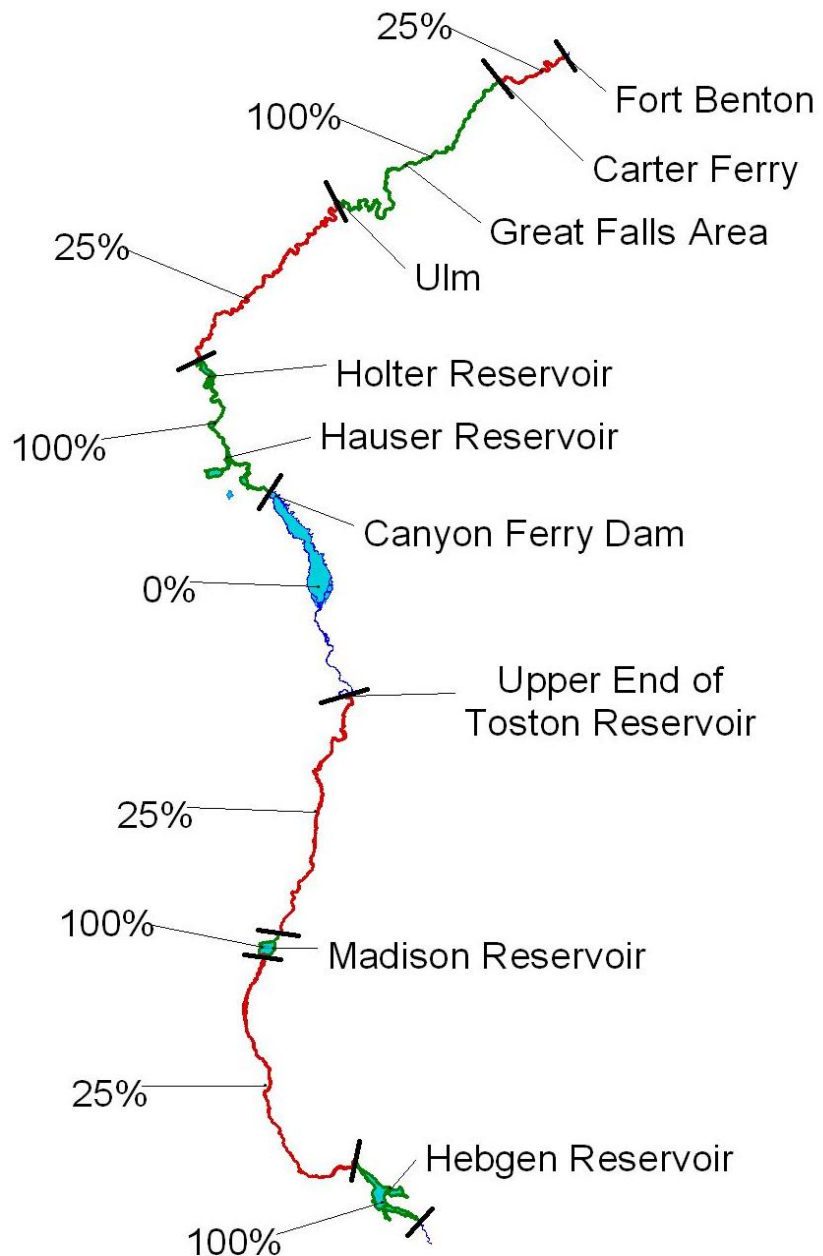
The Fund, with a principal balance of \$6.6 million at the end of the 2016 fiscal year on September 30, 2016, has generated total revenue of \$4.13 million for allocation during the first 12 years (2005-2016). Income earned by the Fund continues to be available on an annual basis over the remaining term of the 40-year License to help address future needs for public recreation in the Project Area. To help finance future land acquisitions that may be needed to address recreation needs, Fund principal can be utilized if an agency or non-profit entity obligates itself to reimburse the Fund in a pre-established time frame determined in cooperation with the River Fund Board.

Post-2005 NorthWestern Energy Match of Agency Contributions

To help address future needs for recreation in the 2188 Project Area beyond the first five years of the License, NorthWestern Energy matches agency contributions to recreation projects approved for funding by the River Fund Board. These match funds provide an additional source of funding for recreation projects and enhancements beyond allocations of Fund income by the Board. A 2005 agreement between the licensee and the River Fund Board limits (based on agency contributions) the total annual amount of the NorthWestern Energy match to \$200,000 plus an inflation adjustment based on the CPI-U of October 1, 2005.

NorthWestern Energy match funds are available for Project reservoirs and specified river segments (see Figure 1.2-1). NorthWestern Energy will match 100% of agency expenditures on projects located on the NorthWestern Energy reservoirs and on the river reaches between Ulm and Rainbow Dam and below Morony Dam to Carter Ferry. NorthWestern Energy will match 25% of agency expenditures for recreation projects located on the remaining river reaches between the reservoirs and below Carter Ferry to Fort Benton (see Figure 1-2.1 and the River Fund Application in Chapter 2-4).

Figure 1-2.1: NorthWestern Energy Matching Contributions
 Missouri-Madison Reservoirs and River Segments with Matching Contributions by NorthWestern Energy



Match is for recreation projects identified and recommended for funding through the CRP planning process and approved for funding by the River Fund Board. Match is of agency expenditures on future recreation projects.

The River Fund Board

The participating agencies, counties and Licensee amended the MOU in 1999 to establish a nonprofit corporation, the Missouri-Madison River Fund, and a River Fund Board of Directors to oversee the Fund and the Plan. The River Fund Board of Directors is the governing body of the River Fund, a nonprofit corporation formed under the Montana Nonprofit Corporation Act. The role of the Board is to oversee the Plan, decide allocations of monies from the Fund, and supervise and control the affairs of the Fund.

The Board consists of eleven voting members, with representation from two federal agencies, one state agency, six counties, NorthWestern Energy, and a one non-voting representative from the Bureau of Reclamation. Directors of the Missouri Madison River Fund oversee formal planning and land use decision-making processes in the Project Area in their respective positions as public land managers and elected officials, in addition to directing the policies and activities of the Missouri-Madison River Fund. Members evolve over time as positions are filled by new individuals, but agency representation is consistent. Board members for 2016 are listed in Table 1-2.6. All members are voting members except for the BOR, as their interest lies outside – though adjacent to – the Project Area.

Table 1-2.6: 2016 Members of the River Fund Board of Directors		
Name	Title	Representing
Mr. Jon Jourdonnais	Leader, Hydropower License Compliance	NorthWestern Energy
Mr. Chas Van Genderen	Administrator, Parks Division	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Mr. Rick Hotaling	Western Montana District Manager	Bureau of Land Management
Mr. Bill Avey	Forest Supervisor	Helena and Lewis and Clark National Forests
Ms. Laura Obert	Commissioner	Broadwater County Commission
Mr. Joe Skinner	Commissioner	Gallatin County Commission
Mr. Stan Klimas	Commissioner	Chouteau County Commission
Mr. Jim Hart	Commissioner	Madison County Commission
Ms. Jane Weber	Commissioner	Cascade County Commission
Mr. Andy Hunthausen	Commissioner	Lewis & Clark County
Mr. Lee Holmes	Canyon Ferry Assistant Manager	US Bureau of Reclamation
Ms. Pam Sveinson	Public Representative	Recreating Public

Visit www.missourimadison.com for a current list of River Fund Board members.

The Board meets annually to direct management of the Fund principal and, beginning in 2006, to allocate earnings from the River Fund to assist with recreation projects that would benefit the public in the Project Area. See Chapter 2-6 for a complete listing and description of projects funded by the River Fund since 2006. The Board is responsible for deciding how funds will be allocated from income earned by the Fund for qualifying recreation projects. The Board addresses its fiduciary responsibility for the Fund through a professional fund manager, accountant and legal counsel who are knowledgeable about prudent investments and federal and state regulations governing non-profit organizations. The Board also is responsible for assessing the Plan every six years to ensure its effectiveness in meeting the public's recreation needs.

How Well has the Plan Worked?

Collaborative efforts such as this Plan demonstrate the importance and value of public-private partnerships in planning for recreation needs, in managing resources, and in generating monies for the long-term trust. Agencies, counties, and private groups and individuals have actively supported these collaborative efforts, with completion (as of fall 2016) of all but 2 of the recreation projects required by the License in the Project Area. These efforts have resulted in a total public recreation benefit of over \$16 million in the Project Area and a principal balance in the Fund of \$6.6 million. Appendix A2 contains a detailed description of projects required by the License, partner contributions, and a photo inventory of these projects.



New trail surfacing and access stairway on the River's Edge Trail in Great Falls.

Chapter 1-3: Plan Updates

To complete the first large-scale update of the Comprehensive Recreation Plan, the Licensee convened a Plan Update and Review Committee (PURC) in 2004 to update the 1996 Plan. The PURC was representative of the agencies and counties that signed the MOU (refer to Chapter 1-2 for more information on MOU participants) and developed a process for decision-making to fund recreation improvements beyond 2005. The Plan adopted intervals for completing Plan updates that coincide with FERC Form 80 reporting and implementation of visitor studies.

The first update to the 2005 update was completed in 2010, and provided recreation managers with current information from the various management plans related to recreation in the Missouri-Madison Corridor, current issues affecting recreation, and evaluation of the application and decision-making process for funding recreation improvements after 2005. This update process was repeated in 2015-2016, with key elements of the plan updated with manager input and review, discussion, and modifications by consensus.

The smaller-scale updates in 2010 and 2015-2016 were completed by members of the Regional Working Groups, whom also represent the agencies and counties that signed the MOU. Members participated by providing comments and feedback on individual sections of the Plan related to their particular agency and in updating the Issues, Vision, and Goals of the Plan (see Chapter 2-1). Between 2005 and 2016, these agency representatives also provided feedback on the application materials and decision-making process related to annual funding allocations for recreation improvements from the River Fund, all of which have been incorporated into this Plan. In addition, updates to the application materials based on feedback from the River Fund Board of Directors have been incorporated into the Plan and River Fund grant application materials.

Chapter 2: The Plan

This chapter provides the core of the Plan for the period 2016 to 2021. It addresses in detail how eligible projects that protect and enhance public recreation in the Corridor are identified, how funds are allocated, and how monitoring and evaluation is conducted to determine whether recreation opportunities and facilities are meeting recreation demands and needs. It also contains basic information that is needed by potential applicants for project funding. An applicant needs to be familiar with all the sections of this chapter in order to prepare a competitive River Fund grant application.

This chapter starts by describing the Issue Statements, Vision, and Goals that are used to guide project selection and project funding. The second section (2-2) describes the process that is used to identify, prioritize, and select projects for funding by the River Fund and NorthWestern Energy matching funds. Section 2-2 also describes who is involved in the process from each Region up to the River Fund Board. The third section (2-3) provides detail on the criteria by which projects are selected. The fourth section (2-4) contains the FY2017 application form that is submitted by project applicants for consideration of funding from the River Fund and NorthWestern Energy matching funds¹. The fifth section (2-5) describes monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management systems and a timeline of monitoring efforts pertinent to public recreation in the Corridor. The last section (2-6) provides a description of recreation projects funded by the River Fund and NorthWestern Energy matching funds for fiscal years 2007 through 2017.



Recreationists enjoy shoreline fishing at Departure Point on Holter Lake.

¹ Refer to www.missourimadison.com for the current River Fund application following calendar year 2016.

Chapter 2-1: Issues, Vision, and Goals

In developing its vision and goals for the Plan update in 2005, the PURC completed a detailed review of the various issues in the 1996 Plan. The PURC then considered current conditions in the Corridor and changes that had occurred since that plan was initiated. Lastly, the PURC identified current issues likely to be important over the next planning period. A similar review was completed for the Plan updates in 2010 and 2015-2016, with Regional Working Groups considering current conditions in the Corridor and recreation management issues likely to be important over the next five years.

Issue Statements and Goals focus on current recreation conditions and trends and provide guidance for the River Fund Board, recreation specialists, and others to identify and prioritize recreation projects. The extent to which a potential project addresses one or more issues and goals is one of the primary criteria for awarding River Fund grants and NorthWestern Energy match funds. Chapters 2-2 and 2-3 provide further detail on the project selection process and criteria.

Issue Statements and Goals are based on a number of current conditions and trends, specifically:

- Increased recreational use of the Project Area has the potential to change the quality of visitor experiences, decrease land managers' ability to maintain the condition of developed and dispersed recreation sites, and may lead to conflicts among different types of users and between users and private landowners.
- Changes in land use, specifically on private properties, may potentially change or alter the open-space character of the Project Area as well as influence the quality and number of areas providing access to the waterway.
- Protection of the natural resource – water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources, in addition to recreation – is paramount in the continued support of a recreation system.
- Interaction of recreationists with the natural environment has implications related to public safety and responsible outdoor behavior, as well as universal accessibility, human health factors, and resource protection concerns.
- Budgetary concerns are directly linked to NorthWestern Energy and state and federal land managers' abilities to cover costs associated with basic operations and maintenance at developed recreation sites within the Project Area.
- Changes to natural resource conditions within the Project Area (wildfires, floods, insect infestations, invasive species, etc.) have the potential to alter recreation use patterns and management of developed recreation sites.
- Exploring collaborative solutions to recreation management issues within the Corridor will help ensure quality recreation opportunities and amenities. Issues are rarely agency-specific, though internal policies may dictate various approaches for resolving those issues by different agencies. Resolving issues collaboratively and efficiently ensures long-term success for providing quality recreation opportunities and amenities.

Issue Statements, Vision, and Goals

Recreational use of the Missouri-Madison River Project Area is increasing in popularity. The Corridor between West Yellowstone and Fort Benton currently provides an array of recreational opportunities from developed urban experiences in Great Falls to primitive experiences in other stretches such as the Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness Area. As user demand increases, the potential to change the quality of various types of recreational experiences in both positive and negative ways also increases.

VISION STATEMENT: To maintain a wide spectrum of quality year-round recreational opportunities in the Project Area ranging from urban and motorized to primitive and non-motorized, consistent with established plans and policies and with protection of existing natural resources.

SPECIFIC RECREATION ISSUES AND GOALS

Condition and Capacity of Recreation Sites and Use Areas

Intensive use of recreation facilities in the Corridor, especially during peak periods, can impact user experiences. Poor condition of both developed and dispersed recreation sites and use areas can negatively impact experiences in the Project Area. Increasing use of existing recreation sites and dispersed use areas creates management issues, including staffing, maintenance, and funding issues. For public land managers, that can exacerbate recreation site issues. When demand increases, there are associated questions about the long-term capacity and funding of existing sites and if and how new sites should be added.

Goal:

To provide safe and well-managed recreation sites and dispersed use areas that provide enjoyable user experiences across a spectrum of opportunities and seasons.

User Demands/Desires for Various Uses and Experiences

Demands and desires of recreationists for various types of recreational experiences are changing over time. Some demands may be long-term and some may be shorter term but intensive. For example, personal watercraft - unknown several decades ago - are increasingly popular now.

In addition to the recreation opportunities currently available in the corridor, demands and desires for more specific opportunities identified during the CRP planning process and subsequent updates include but are not limited to the following:

- more developed interpretative and educational opportunities
- more wildlife viewing opportunities
- undeveloped site use
- universal accessibility
- boat-in only sites
- swimming areas
- sites available by reservation
- more trail opportunities

However, demands and desires are not always uniform across the Project Area and can vary among regions. Environmental, social, and cultural conditions are specific to each region of the Project Area, requiring more localized perceptions of demands and desires.

Goal:

To monitor and evaluate through surveys of visitors and managers the emerging and changing trends in recreation uses and desires within short and long-term timeframes and develop responses appropriate to the intensity and priority of the demand.

Conflicts Among Recreation Uses and Between Recreationists and Landowners

As more recreational uses become established along the Corridor, there is increased potential for conflicts among uses. Examples include wildlife watchers or fly fishermen who are disturbed by powerboats or personal watercraft, or hikers who encounter motorbikes on trails.

As recreational uses increase in the Corridor, there is also more potential for disturbance on private lands. Recreationists may impose additional operating and maintenance costs on landowners through their actions, such as intentionally or unintentionally trespassing, leaving litter, or leaving livestock gates open.

Similarly, discrepancies related to fees and use policies can also impose additional costs on public land managers and agencies.

Factors influencing conflict include but are not limited to the following:

- Noise (from personal watercraft, RV generators, large user groups, etc.)
- Demand and competition among outfitters/guides and other recreating public
- Sea planes utilizing water bodies to access adjoining private lands
- Motorized versus non-motorized uses
- Trespass on private lands not open to public access

Goal:

To identify and implement management strategies that reduce and/or mitigate conflicts among recreation uses and users and that reduce and/or mitigate conflicts among recreationists and landowners.

Changes in Land Use

Over 60 percent of the land in the Corridor is privately owned and subject to development. While traditional land uses on private land in the Corridor have historically been primarily agricultural, transition to other uses, primarily residential, is occurring at a rapid pace in some areas. This in turn can create demand for streambank alterations, such as riprap along rivers to stabilize banks and prevent erosion near homesites. Development along river and reservoir banks can diminish open space that some recreationists seek.

Ranch and farm use adjacent to reservoirs and along the river corridor provides open space settings. However, ranchers and farmers are faced with declining marginal revenues for their operations, so the value of the land for residential use can be a considerable economic incentive for farmers and ranchers to subdivide and/or sell.

Goal:

To support agency- and NGO-initiated projects in cooperation with interested private landowners to maintain open space and agricultural lands and to mitigate effects of new development in a manner that is mutually acceptable to landowners and recreationists.

Inter-relationship Between Recreation Uses and Other Resources

There are a number of factors and resources that directly or indirectly affect the quality of the recreation experience. Conversely, recreation use can also have a direct or indirect effect on other resources. Although the primary focus of the CRP is recreation, inter-related issues cannot be ignored.

Issues that fall outside of the primary recreation focus, but which are related include the following:

- Water quality
- Water quantity
- Air quality
- Cultural resources
- Fisheries
- Stability of riparian and shoreline vegetation
- Economic development related to tourism and recreation

Since the development of the 1996 Plan, Technical Advisory Committees for Project 2188 have been formed for Water Quality, Wildlife, and Fisheries. The Project also has a Cultural Resources Management Plan and is regulated for water flows and releases from the dams (quantity issues). In addition, other organizations promote economic development related to tourism and recreation.

Goal:

To encourage communication between technical committees on shared resource concerns and to cooperate with other committees and groups on partnership opportunities that advance shared goals.

Universal Access and Related Opportunities

Accessibility to recreation opportunities by all individuals including those with disabilities has received attention at the national level as well as locally in the Project Area. Physically challenged Americans desire opportunities to recreate and to experience the resources and amenities of the Project Area.

Goal:

Continue to improve and expand recreation opportunities that offer universal accessibility.

Public Safety

The demand and need for public safety related to recreation use is affected by the ability of local law enforcement and responsible agencies to execute a timely response to emergency situations and to effectively promote public education on safety issues. Additionally, the complexity of agency jurisdiction creates confusion for agencies and recreationists. Public education and outreach are key methods for proactively preventing accidents and increasing public safety. Topics that can be addressed to increase public safety include but are not limited to the following:

- Search and rescue
- Vandalism prevention
- Resource protection
- Cold-water injury awareness
- Law enforcement limitations
- Boating safety and hazard communication
- Integrated enforcement and management
- Jurisdictional clarification and awareness
- Emergency reporting, response, and communications

Goal:

To maintain or proactively increase public safety for recreationists in the Project Area.

Responsible Outdoor Recreation

Inappropriate behavior by recreationists can cause significant degradation of natural and cultural resources. Social conflicts may also arise and may severely impact visitor satisfaction and enjoyment. A proactive education and outreach program that promotes responsible behavior by outdoor recreationists, such as the national Leave No Trace program, is an excellent means to help preserve the integrity of the natural and social environment in the Project Area. Similarly, outdoor education programs that engage students will help instill positive outdoor ethics in younger individuals. Existing and well-designed frameworks for the promotion of outdoor skills and ethics include principles of:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Properly dispose of waste
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors
- Minimize vegetative disturbance

Goal:

To promote responsible user behavior that protects natural, cultural, and social resources in the Project Area.

Access Roads

Use of existing secondary and local roads to access recreation developments on area reservoirs and rivers is also increasing due to both the popularity of water-based recreation and residential development on private lands in the Corridor. When road maintenance practices are changed or improvements are made, recreation use patterns can also change, potentially leading to conflicts with recreation management.

Goal:

To coordinate road programs of state and county governments with those for the USFS, BLM, and FWP to ensure that development, maintenance, and road closures are consistent with recreational goals wherever possible.

Chapter 2-2: Process for Project Evaluation

This section describes the decision-making process for identifying and selecting new projects, the role of the Regions and the Corridor Ranking Committee in creating a list of prioritized and recommended projects for the Project Area, and the role of the Board in making decisions on the recommendations they receive.

The River Fund Board has decision-making authority to allocate River Fund dollars to projects under this Plan, but the process leading to their decision is one that develops from the ground up. Potential projects are identified at the regional level and move through a series of steps that includes the general public, the recreating public, as well as the groups and agencies that might implement or sponsor a project.

The project selection process is annual and encourages locally identified and supported projects that meet the overall criteria. The process promotes qualifying projects and winnows out those that do not meet minimum basic criteria (identified in Section 2-3). The basic premise of this grassroots-oriented process is that the public and recreation professionals living, working and recreating in each region know best what is needed in their respective areas.

Role of the Regions

Persons living and recreating in and near the Corridor who are interested in proposing a potential project are encouraged to share their ideas during Recreation Advisory Group meetings or contact recreation managers who serve on Regional Working Groups. Discussing information and ideas with other agencies and persons will serve to strengthen projects through collaboration, and opportunities for resource sharing may be identified. Using partnerships to enhance recreation projects is one of the project scoring criteria. Potential applicants that are not already participating in the Missouri-Madison MOU need to solicit project sponsorship from a current and active member of a Regional Working Group (list of current members available at www.missourimadison.com).

Members of the Regional Working Groups score the projects that originate in each region at the annual fall meeting based on criteria contained in the application. Applications are awarded up to 90 points by Regional Working Group members, and scores of all regional members are averaged to produce a ranking of projects in each region. These projects and scores are then forwarded to the Corridor Ranking Committee, a committee of peers representing each region and each agency that considers projects for the entire Project Area.

Role of the Corridor Ranking Committee

The role of the Corridor Ranking Committee is to prioritize projects for the entire Corridor as a recommendation to the River Fund Board. The Committee considers projects as ranked by the regional groups and develops a list of ranked projects for the entire Project Area. Decisions of the committee are made by consensus of its members. To differentiate similarly ranked regional projects and identify a clear ranking of projects for recommendation to the Board, the committee may, by consensus, award up to a maximum of 10 discretionary points per project using the same criteria as the regions, or adjust the ranking of projects to reflect overall priority among all submitted applications. The committee may, by consensus, also recommend that specific projects receive no funding if situations related to project readiness, lack of legal access, or other elements of the project are inconsistent or questionable. The committee forwards a list of recommended project funding to the Board for review.

The Committee members rotate annually, with representatives of the USFS, BLM and FWP; city or county government, and NorthWestern Energy. All committee members are active members of a Regional Working Group to ensure familiarity with the proposed projects and the Corridor as a whole.

Agency representation rotates annually for each region. For example, in the first year of committee organization, the USFS might represent the Hebgen-Madison region, BLM the Hauser-Holter region, and FWP the Great Falls region. In year two, USFS representation would shift to the Hauser-Holter region, BLM to the Great Falls region, and FWP to the Hebgen-Madison region. Agency representation continues to rotate on a yearly basis to ensure participation across all regions. The representative for local government is also selected on a rotating basis from each region. NorthWestern Energy designates a licensee representative. Committee working rules and procedures are established as needed by a consensus of the Regional Working Groups.

Role of the River Fund Board of Directors

Under the MOU, the Board is directed to review the project funding recommendations of the Regional Working Groups and decide allocations of monies from the Fund to assist with the operation and maintenance, development and acquisition of recreation resources that would benefit public recreation in the Project Area. The River Fund Board reviews recommendations for the entire Corridor based on project ranking developed by the Corridor Ranking Committee.

Board decisions on allocations from the Fund occur at annual meetings held during the last quarter of the year, typically in December. Notice of the annual meeting is provided to each Board director and to each Regional Working Group. A quorum for Board action at these meetings occurs with 6 of 11 voting members present, three of whom must be representatives of the USFS, BLM and FWP, and one a representative for NorthWestern Energy. The remaining two members needed for a quorum are representatives of participating counties or the public representative.

Board decisions are made by a consensus of members present. If consensus cannot be achieved on Board actions, decisions are made by vote, with consent needed from seven members. The Board has established bylaws that outline operation of the Fund and Board.

Process for Project Identification and Evaluation

The process for decision-making is described below and shown in Figure 2-2.1: Flowchart of Process and Guidelines for Project Evaluation.

Regional Actions

1. *Identifying Candidate Projects.* Each spring, members of Regional Working Groups identify candidate projects for River Fund grants and NorthWestern Energy matching funds. Members of the recreating public provide input on projects of interest during Recreation Advisory Groups or to recreation managers who are members of Regional Working Groups. The Advisory Group meetings are open to the public and include representatives of organizations, businesses, and interested individuals. Regional Working Groups include representatives for public agencies, counties, and NGO's that identify candidate projects at their spring meetings. This broad-based effort helps identify a diverse set of project proposals for consideration and discussion.
2. *Consultation and Collaboration.* Between the spring and fall regional meetings, parties consult with each other to identify partnership opportunities on projects that benefit public recreation in the Project Area. Consistency with recreation management plans and with applicable plans and policies for counties and other local governments is verified, and persons/groups interested in submitting an

application determine how well a proposed project supports the goals of the Plan and objectives of other plans and policies. Project screening criteria are addressed, as outlined in Section 2-3.

3. *Completion and Submittal of an Application.* Agencies, counties, and interested groups and individuals who have identified a project sponsor complete a project application prior to the late summer deadline and submit it to NorthWestern Energy (see Section 2-4). Submittals address project-screening criteria and identify available cost-share funds. Submitted applications are posted online at www.missourimadison.com, the website for the Comprehensive Recreation Plan.
4. *Project Feedback and Scoring.* The fall meeting of the Regional Working Groups provides an opportunity for further discussion of projects and feedback on submitted applications. Members of the Regional Working Groups use feedback received from the recreating public, along with information from surveys, site information from managers, information from plans addressing recreation management, and other sources to score individual projects with up to 90 points. Scores given by Regional Working Group members are averaged and projects are ranked based on these average scores. The process is completed for each region. Projects not recommended to receive funding are identified; all other prioritized projects are advanced to the Corridor Ranking Committee.

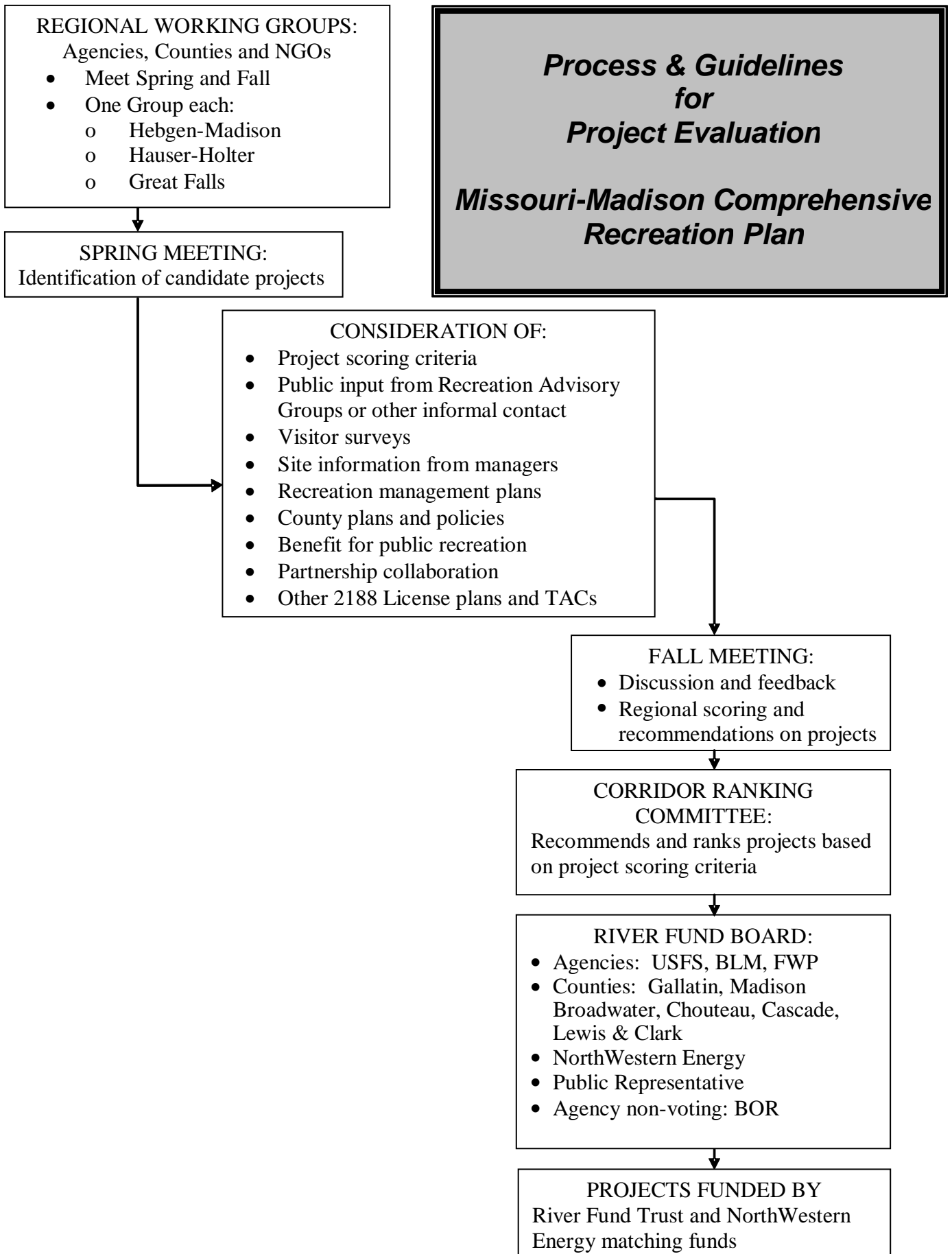
Actions of the Corridor Ranking Committee

5. *Corridor Ranking of Projects.* After receiving regional scoring for projects, a Corridor Ranking Committee evaluates and scores projects for the entire Project Area, using the same criteria as the Regional Working Groups. The committee may, by consensus, award up to 10 additional points to individual projects, or adjust the ranking of projects to reflect overall priority among all submitted applications.
6. *Submittal of Prioritized and Recommended Projects to the Board.* The Corridor Ranking Committee submits its prioritized recommendations to the River Fund Board for review and action at the Board's annual meeting. The Committee provides review comments on projects to the Board as determined necessary.

Actions of the River Fund Board

7. *Board Decision.* The Board reviews and acts on recommendations received from the Corridor Ranking Committee. Based on Board discussion and decisions, funding awards are made with use of Fund income, with NorthWestern Energy matching funds, or with use of Fund principal for acquisition projects with Fund reimbursement required. Projects not funded may be re-submitted in following years. The Board provides review comments on projects as determined necessary.

Figure 2-2.1: Flowchart of Process and Guidelines for Project Evaluation



Chapter 2-3: Criteria for Project Selection

This section outlines the criteria for awarding River Fund grants and NorthWestern Energy match funds for projects. During the Plan update completed in 2005, the PURC found it made most sense to develop criteria in terms of what information the Regional Working Groups and River Fund Board would need and how best to have applicants submit that information. Consequently, a River Fund application form was developed (see Section 2-4) and while it remains largely the same since originally developed, minor updates have been made to the form to refine and clarify scoring criteria as needed over the first eleven years of use.

How criteria were developed

The PURC agreed that criteria would be used to score projects and carefully reviewed the 1996 Plan as a starting point in establishing criteria. It was clear from that Plan that current issues were intended to guide project selection. Considerable emphasis was also placed on the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) frameworks to monitor change with quantifiable data and to identify trigger points for needed actions. (See Chapter 2-5 and Appendix D for more information on LAC and ROS.)

The PURC considered other prototypes for project criteria and selection, including application forms from the national Land and Water Conservation Fund and from the states of Washington and Montana. It was agreed that the application should be simple - easy for both the applicant to complete and for reviewers to score.

Members of the PURC who had been involved in developing the 1996 Plan highlighted the role of agencies in developing the Fund and their expectations that operation and maintenance of existing sites constitute a fundamental priority for future allocations. The PURC agreed that maintaining existing recreation sites is a key priority. Consequently, any project related to operations and maintenance of an existing site automatically receives extra scoring points. PURC members were concerned with the potential use of River Fund allocations to replace existing non-River Fund operations and maintenance funds. The review criteria were developed to identify repeat funding requests for operations and maintenance and to score those applications lower. In addition, NorthWestern Energy has identified a higher level of commitment to providing funds for recreation sites and projects developed pursuant to the Project 2188 License.

Over the course of implementing the 1996 Plan, coordination of projects and ongoing efforts of the Regional Working Groups has improved and strengthened inter-agency cooperation on recreation projects. Recognizing the value of this and the role played by the CRP process in helping to achieve more coordinated efforts, the PURC emphasized criteria for coordination and collaboration in selecting projects. The extent to which a project involves collaboration is one of the scoring criteria.

The PURC also agreed that current issues should remain a basic focus for any qualifying project and determined that applicants should clearly identify which CRP issues and goals a potential project would address. How well a project addresses an issue or goal (described in detail in Chapter 2-1) is one of the scoring criteria for project applications.

The PURC agreed that documenting need for a project was important. Applicants can do so using a variety of means, including data routinely collected for recreation activities under the CRP (such as the visitor and managers' surveys, described in more detail in Chapter 2-5) and using the LAC/ROS systems wherever applicable. Documenting need is also one of the scoring criteria.

The PURC recognized the inter-relationship among recreation projects and other Project Area resources, such as water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources. One of the scoring criteria evaluates how the proposed project is consistent with or supports existing federal, state, and local plans relevant to the Project Area. No project can be considered that is inconsistent with an existing plan.

Over the first 10 years of implementing the River Fund grant program, the River Fund Board noted varying levels of project design associated with project applications. Projects with little or no design work completed at the time of application have a higher propensity to require additional funding once final design is complete or to require a lengthier timeframe to complete the project. For this reason, projects beginning with the FY2016 application cycle were scored based on the level of design completed and extent to which design options have been considered.

The Regional Working Groups complete annual reviews of the scoring criteria and guidelines in the River Fund application form to ensure that the criteria represents current recreation management issues and goals in the Corridor. The current criteria are listed below.

The Basic Criteria

Three basic criteria must be met by all proposed projects in order to qualify for further consideration:

1. Projects must be consistent with the FERC Project 2188 License.
2. Projects must occur within the Missouri-Madison Project Area (within one mile of the nine reservoirs operated by NorthWestern Energy and the river reaches between them, and below Morony Dam to Fort Benton, excluding the Bureau of Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Project and the State of Montana's Toston Project).
3. Projects must be consistent with or support management plans in the Project Area, including but not limited to:
 - a. Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan.
 - b. Management plans developed by the Forest Service, BLM, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
 - c. Land use plans and growth management policies for counties and communities in the Corridor.

In addition, by submitting a project application, applicants acknowledge that all permitting and planning requirements, such as NEPA and MEPA, and consultation regarding cultural resource management will be completed prior to expenditure of awarded funds.

Scoring Criteria

Qualifying projects will be scored based on the following:

1. Project is for operation and maintenance of an existing recreation site or an existing Project 2188 license site.
2. Project involves collaboration with other agencies or organizations.
3. Project provides a benefit to public recreation in the Project Area and addresses specific issues and goals of the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan.
4. Project responds to a clearly identified need.
5. Project design options have been considered, estimated, and a preferred design selected.
6. Project supports or protects other resources and is consistent with or supports resource plans in the Project Area.

Addressing Future Needs for Recreation Site Maintenance, Improvements, and Acquisitions

The Plan recognizes the importance of maintaining recreation facilities within the Project Area, consistent with FERC direction and orders for ensuring responsible long-term management of the developments and improvements over the 40-year term of the license. Land management agencies retain the primary responsibility for managing most of these recreation facilities, with supplemental funding for O&M provided by NorthWestern Energy (see Appendix A2).

If those agencies experience unusual demand for additional O&M funding for these sites, they will recommend as their highest priority the distribution of funds available from the River Fund for the upkeep and maintenance of these existing recreation sites, consistent with current agency policy and priorities. Use of funds distributed from the River Fund for additional O&M funding for agencies would occur under unusual operating conditions and as needed to complete FERC-required actions, and not to replace basic agency operating and maintenance funds.

The Plan also recognizes the need for recreation amenities to better accommodate visitor demands, and to protect resources as use patterns change in the future. Therefore, the needs for maintenance and improvements must be balanced with future opportunities for acquisition of interests in key private property that would improve recreation access, address other recreation issues and goals, and help ensure protection of recreation resources along project reservoirs and in the Project Area.



Late summer campers at the Fort Benton Canoe Launch and Campground

Chapter 2-4: Project Application Materials and Process

This section outlines the application process for recreation project funding by the River Fund. A step-by-step explanation of the process and necessary application materials, required information, and scoring criteria are provided. The FY2017 application form provides additional information regarding the development and submittal of project applications and criteria pertaining to scoring of those applications. For current application materials following FY2017, visit www.missourimadison.com.

Process for Project Application and Advancement

1. **Identification of Project Sponsor:** Project applicants must consult with a project sponsor, defined as a representative of a federal or state agency, local government, or the licensee, who is an active member of a Regional Working Group. The project sponsor provides input and support for the project throughout the application process, and ensures that a project meets the Basic Criteria requirements of the River Fund Grant Program. A list of current Regional Working Group members is available at www.missourimadison.com.
2. **Application Form:** The applicant, with the support and consultation of the project sponsor, completes the application form for submittal to NorthWestern Energy and American Lands, who then forward the application to the appropriate Regional Working Group. See section 2-2 for further explanation of this process.
3. **Presentation to Regional Working Group:** The project applicant or project sponsor may present the project application to the Regional Working Group at the fall meeting. Qualifying projects are scored and prioritized amongst other proposed recreation projects in each region.
4. **Consideration by Corridor Ranking Committee:** The prioritized list of projects for each region are advanced and prioritized amongst projects from the other two regions.
5. **Consideration by River Fund Board:** The prioritized list of all projects is advanced to the River Fund Board by the Corridor Ranking Committee. The Board considers the projects and the ranking, and awards funds.
6. **NorthWestern Energy Matching Funds:** Projects that receive funding from the River Fund may also be eligible for NorthWestern Energy matching funds based on requirements and match levels established in the MOU. The matching funds percentage is explained in detail and illustrated on a map found in the application form.

**MISSOURI-MADISON RIVER FUND
GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION
AND APPLICATION PROCESS – FY2017**

Please use this application form to submit a recreation project request for funding to the Missouri-Madison River Fund Board. Applications must be submitted electronically by **5:00 pm Friday, August 26, 2016**, to:

American Lands
Attn: Kim Bergstrom

Email: pinnacle@blackfoot.net

Telephone: 406-546-2447

AND

NorthWestern Energy

Attn: Jon Jourdonnais

Email: jon.jourdonnais@northwestern.com

Telephone: 406-490-1802

Applications will be reviewed by the Regional Working Groups each fall. The River Fund Board will only review applications that have been forwarded by the Regional Working Groups and Corridor Ranking Committee. The River Fund Board will make decisions on project awards in December of each year.

Applicants will develop project applications with the support and consultation of a Project Sponsor. Project sponsorship denotes that the proposed project meets basic criteria (below) for consideration. A project that does not meet the basic criteria will not be advanced by the Regional Working Group to the River Fund Board and will not be considered for funding. It is the project sponsor's responsibility to ensure the basic criteria are met.

1. The project is consistent with the FERC Project 2188 License.
2. The project occurs in the Missouri-Madison Project Area (within one mile of the nine reservoirs operated by NorthWestern Energy and the river reaches between these reservoirs and below Morony Dam to Fort Benton, excluding the Bureau of Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Project and the State of Montana's Toston Project).
3. The project must be consistent with or support management plans in the Project Area, including but not limited to:
 - a. Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan.
 - b. Management plans developed by the Forest Service, BLM, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.
 - c. Land use plans and growth management policies for counties and communities in the Corridor.

Applicants are advised to carefully consider the scoring criteria and guidelines provided in the application form when preparing their project proposal. Applications will be scored by Regional Working Group members and the Corridor Ranking Committee based on responses to these items. These scores will provide a ranking for all projects in the Corridor, and recommendations to the River Fund Board for project funding will be based on this ranking. The Board, however, reserves the right to fund projects as they determine appropriate.

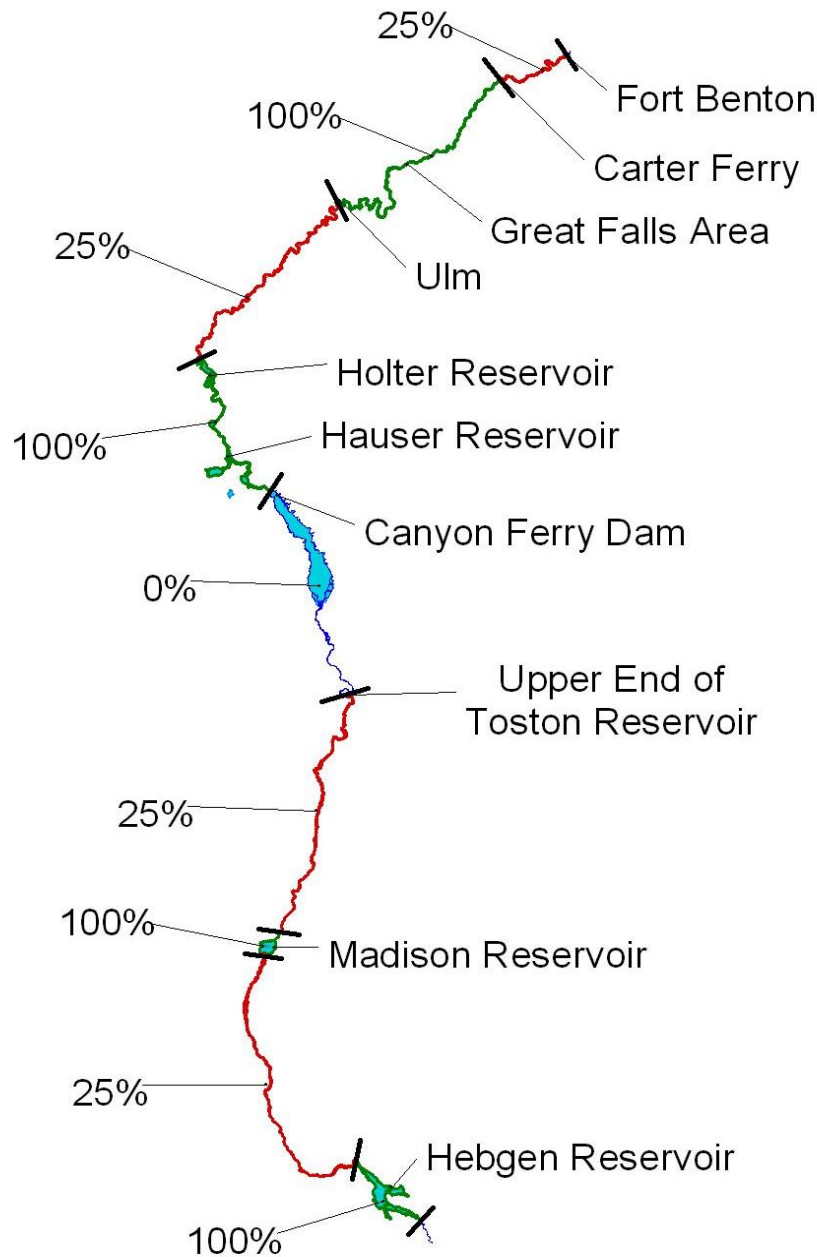
Actions required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for 2188 License compliance related to recreation receive highest priority for funding by the River Fund and are not subject to project scoring. Any such mandatory compliance items, if presented, would be a result of FERC public use inspections or FERC orders, and may reduce the amount of funding available for other projects.

Projects that receive funding from the River Fund Grant Program may be eligible for matching funds from NorthWestern Energy based on the location of the project and the public agency contributions to the project. The following section provides information related to matching funds. No separate application form is required for the NorthWestern Energy match request.

NORTHWESTERN ENERGY MATCHING FUNDS

Per provisions of the MOU for the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan, NorthWestern Energy will provide matching funds for recreation projects approved for funding by the River Fund Board. The amount of the match varies by the location of the project and the amount of public agency contributions² to the project, as noted below and on the following map. The total amount of matching funds for all projects is limited to \$200,000 plus an inflation adjustment per year.

Missouri-Madison Reservoirs and River Segments with Matching Fund Contributions by NorthWestern Energy



100% Match* Reservoirs and River Reaches:

Hebgen Reservoir
 Madison Reservoir
 Hauser Reservoir
 Holter Reservoir
 Great Falls Area Reservoirs (Black Eagle, Rainbow, Cochrane, Ryan and Morony)
 River reach from Ulm to Rainbow Dam
 River reach below Morony Dam to Carter Ferry FAS

25% Match* River Reaches:

Below Hebgen Dam to Madison Reservoir
 Below Madison Dam to Toston Reservoir
 Below Holter Dam to Ulm
 Below Carter Ferry FAS to Fort Benton

* Match is a percentage of expenditures and in-kind support from public agencies² on proposed projects, and applies to projects identified and recommended for funding through the CRP planning process and approved for funding by the River Fund Board.

Examples:

If the USFS proposes a project on Hebgen Lake with USFS funding and in-kind contributions total \$2,400, and FWP is also contributing \$600 to the project, then agency contributions total \$3,000. The USFS can request a NorthWestern Energy match of \$3,000 for this project.

If FWP proposes a project on the Madison River with FWP funding and in-kind contributions of \$2,000, while a non-profit group also contributes \$800 to the project, agency contributions total \$2,000 and FWP can request a NorthWestern Energy match of \$500 (25%) for this project.

² Agency contributions refer to agencies identified in the MOU (USFS, BLM, FWP and BOR) and directly involved in the project. Public monies and support from other sources, such as the Recreational Trails Program, Transportation Initiatives, or in-kind labor from project supporters, while available for use on projects, will not be matched by NorthWestern Energy funds. Only sponsoring and supporting agency funds and contributions will be matched by NorthWestern Energy.

**MISSOURI-MADISON RIVER FUND
RECREATION PROJECT
APPLICATION FORM FY2017**

Project Name: _____

Reservoir or River Segment: _____ County(ies): _____

Site Name (or legal location if no site name): _____

Applicant Name and Agency _____

Position (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Telephone # _____ E-mail _____

Project Sponsor:

A Project Sponsor is required in order to submit an application to the River Fund. Project sponsors serve as active members of Missouri-Madison Regional Working Groups, and include representatives of the U.S. Forest Service; Bureau of Land Management; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; local government; Madison, Gallatin, Broadwater, Chouteau, Lewis and Clark, or Cascade Counties; NorthWestern Energy and the Bureau of Reclamation. Visit www.missourimadison.com for a list of current Regional Working Group members.

Project Sponsor Name _____

Agency and Position _____

Address _____

Telephone # _____ E-mail _____

Complete the financial section below by providing total project cost, contributions by applicant and cooperators, request for NorthWestern Energy match of agency funds (see detail on page 2 of this application), and River Fund Grant request. Document in-kind contributions by public agencies for determination of NorthWestern Energy match request. A description of funding sources and in-kind contributions should be included in the Project Description.

Financial Support

Total Project Cost: \$ _____

Applicant Contributions: \$ _____

Other Contributions - Please list by source:

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

NorthWestern Energy Match Request: \$ _____

River Fund Grant Request: \$ _____

Proposed Project Implementation Period: _____

**MISSOURI-MADISON RIVER FUND
RECREATION PROJECT
APPLICATION FORM FY2017**

1. Has this project been previously submitted for funding consideration by the River Fund Board, either as a separate project or part of another project? Yes No

If yes, please identify which years the application was submitted and, if the project was previously funded, list the amount funded by year.

2. Is the proposed project at one of the Project 2188 license sites identified in the Missouri-Madison MOU and listed on page A2-2 of the Comprehensive Recreation Plan? Yes No

3. **Project Description:** Provide a brief (½ page) description of the proposed project.

4. **Cultural Resource Management:** Cultural Resource Management (CRM) requirements for any activity related to this Project must be completed and documented to NorthWestern Energy (pursuant to Article 425 of the FERC Project 2188 License) prior to expenditure of River Fund grants and NorthWestern Energy matching funds for any land-disturbing activity or the modification, renovation, or removal of any buildings or structures. Agency applicants must submit a copy of the proposed project to a designated Cultural Resource Specialist for their agency. Private parties or non-governmental organizations are encouraged to submit a copy of their proposed project to a CRM consultant they may have employed. River Fund grant and NorthWestern Energy matching fund payments, for those projects approved by the Board, will be withheld until this CRM information has been submitted. Summarize how you will comply with CRM requirements and provide evidence of completion to NorthWestern Energy.

5. Respond to the following Scoring Criteria in no more than two (2) additional written pages on 8.5 x 11 inch paper, with 1-inch margins on all sides, in a font not smaller than 11 point. Be sure page numbers are included in a footer within the margin of each page.

Scoring Criteria

5.1 *Project is for operation and maintenance of an existing recreation site or an existing Project 2188 license site.* Describe how the project would support O&M needs at an existing recreation site that are over and above day-to-day site maintenance. Needs may include measures to open a site for public use as well as minor repair; facility upgrade, reconstruction, and replacement; and major site rehabilitation.

5.2 *Project involves collaboration with other agencies or organizations.* Identify project partners other than NorthWestern Energy or River Fund, if any, and describe their participation. Document all funding sources and all in-kind support and services to a project, because all are sources of partnerships and in-kind contributions from public agencies qualify for calculation of NorthWestern Energy matching funds. If there are no project partners, explain why.

5.3 *Project provides a benefit to public recreation in the Project Area and addresses specific issues and goals of the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan (CRP).* Identify how the project provides a benefit to public recreation. Describe how specific issues and goals in Chapter 2-1 of the CRP would be supported.

5.4 *Project responds to a clearly identified need.* Describe and document the need for this project and how the project would address that need. Cite specific sources, as possible, to establish need and support the project. Discuss consequences if the funding request is unsuccessful. For a new

construction or acquisition project, identify how post-project, long-term costs (such as site maintenance and management) will be provided.

5.5 Project design options have been considered, estimated, and a preferred design selected. Well-designed projects reduce occurrences of budgetary overages, design changes, and additional complications. Discuss the current design phase for this project and include cost estimates.

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

6. Attach map(s) showing the location of the proposed project, drawings and design work related to the project, and photos (as available) at the end of the application.

7. Permitting and Planning Acknowledgement:

By submitting this application, and with an award of grant funds, applicant agrees that all permitting and planning requirements, such as NEPA and MEPA and cultural resource compliance, will be completed *prior to expenditures of awarded funds*. Furthermore, all design, layout, and contractual requirements will be completed in a timely manner.

8. Submit the application as a single file in Microsoft Word (or comparable) format.

9. Contact Kim Bergstrom or Jon Jourdonnais with questions.

**MISSOURI-MADISON RIVER FUND
RECREATION PROJECT
SCORING GUIDELINES**

Projects will be scored on the following items by the Regional Working Groups. *Project scoring is not to be completed by the applicant when the application is submitted.*

Criteria	Points	Scoring Techniques
Project is for operation and maintenance of an existing recreation site or an existing Project 2188 license site.	10-25	A base score of <u>10</u> points is allowed for a non-Project 2188 recreation site and a base score of <u>20</u> points is allowed for a Project 2188 license site under this criterion. Base score <u>does not apply</u> if O&M of an existing site is not part of the proposed project; enter NA (Not Applicable) and zero points in this case. ~ Higher points will be awarded to Project 2188 license sites that are higher priority and are not a recurring expense. ~ Lower points will be awarded to projects that are low priority and/or have been previously funded. ~ Higher points will be awarded to projects at existing sites that are higher priority and are not a recurring expense. ~ Projects that have been previously funded will only receive high points if they can demonstrate the unique nature of the request and demonstrate efforts to reduce or eliminate recurring requests.
Project involves collaboration with other agencies or organizations.	0-20	Higher points awarded for strong partnerships strengthening the project through: ~ labor ~ materials ~ funding.
Project provides a benefit to public recreation in the Project Area and addresses specific issues/goals of the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan.	0-15	Higher points awarded for: ~ clear, direct relationship to identified issues and goals ~ degree of increased or improved benefit to public recreation related to those goals.
Project responds to a clearly identified need.	0-10	Higher points awarded for clear documentation of need for the project and effectiveness of project response to the identified need. Documentation of need can include information from: ~ managers' surveys (conducted by NorthWestern Energy) ~ visitor surveys (conducted by NorthWestern Energy) ~ data from other sources or agencies ~ recreating public and user groups. Applicants should provide information on other existing resources as relevant, including private sector activities that provide similar services.
Project design options have been considered, estimated, and a preferred design selected.	0-10	Higher points awarded for detailed designs that demonstrate an applicant's commitment to the project. High points may also be awarded for projects seeking design funds ahead of construction funds when budgets don't allow for detailed designs to be generated.
Project supports or protects other resources and is consistent with or supports other plans in the Project Area.	0-10	Higher points awarded for clear demonstration of support for <u>other resources</u> and other <u>resource plans</u> related to: ~ public access ~ Project 2188 License plans other than CRP ~ water quality ~ land use ~ fisheries ~ land management ~ wildlife ~ cultural resources ~ habitats
Total possible points	90	

Chapter 2-5: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Management

This chapter provides discussion of monitoring and evaluation procedures established to ensure that this Plan successfully meets its goals. Additionally, this chapter highlights management strategies that ensure continued monitoring of key elements in the Corridor.

Two elements of monitoring and evaluation are necessary for ensuring success of the integrated, comprehensive approach to resource management set forth by this Plan:

1. Monitoring and evaluating site and resource conditions and visitor satisfaction to ensure management is responding to public needs while protecting natural resources.
2. Monitoring and evaluating Plan elements of the decision-making framework and funding allocation processes for continued support of the recreation system.

Monitoring and Evaluating Sites, Resources, and Visitors

While visitor survey data reveals high levels of user satisfaction throughout the Corridor, managers are aware that priorities for individual resources and amenities may change over time. As managers take actions to resolve current issues, their management strategies must be able to adapt and respond to new issues and changes in priorities as well as help deter or avoid conditions that are deemed unacceptable. Prompt identification of and appropriate responses to unacceptable situations that present themselves is crucial to effectively manage for desired settings and visitor experiences. This is best accomplished through a system of monitoring and evaluation.

Specific elements of data collection are:

- An annual Managers' Survey that provides information about site conditions and facilities for all developed recreation sites and some undeveloped recreation sites in the Corridor.
- Periodic Visitor Surveys that provide information on user satisfaction with opportunities, experiences, and facilities in the Corridor, as well as insight into trip characteristics and site use.
- Annual collection of Visitor Use Counts in the Corridor.
- Periodic County-level land development updates that show where development within the Corridor has occurred.

Information gleaned from these sources is relayed to land managers and other interested parties by:

- Regional Working Group meetings held each spring and fall.
- Recreation Advisory Groups meetings or contacts through the Missouri-Madison recreation website (www.missourimadison.com).
- River Fund Board meetings held each winter.

The concepts of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) together form an adaptive management framework that includes objective evaluation of resource conditions relative to adopted standards. These tools are utilized by the USFS, BLM, and other federal agencies in developing and implementing management strategies on lands they currently manage. The process is widely accepted and used by public agency resource specialists on Federal lands (see Appendix D for more information on LAC and ROS).

Public land managers for the Corridor determined important characteristics that should be monitored as indicators of change, and established thresholds with potential management actions to remedy unacceptable situations. While some indicator elements and standards have remained relatively constant since 1996, others have been modified or added so that conditions monitored under the current LAC and

ROS framework are appropriate for issues faced by managers. Indicators and standards developed for the Plan are listed in Appendix D.

Indicator data are collected by gathering site information through the use of a Visitor Survey and Managers' Survey and through Visitor Use Count studies. Visitor Surveys are conducted at regular intervals to collect information regarding visitor experiences and satisfaction. The Managers' Survey is completed and submitted to NorthWestern Energy annually by land managers most familiar with the activities, facilities, and events at developed recreation sites in the Corridor. A Recreation Visitor Use Count study is conducted annually by NorthWestern Energy to monitor visitor use of recreation sites in the Corridor.

An assessment of conditions relative to the thresholds established by the LAC framework identifies which recreation sites in the Corridor have physical, managerial, or social problems requiring attention. NorthWestern Energy provides a report of indicator data to land managers through the Regional Working Group meetings to keep them informed about instances where current conditions exceed established thresholds. Specific problems identified by the assessment are then evaluated by land managers for potential actions and possible application for a River Fund grant (see Chapters 2-2 and 2-3).

Monitoring and Evaluating Plan Elements

Development of this Plan brings with it a responsibility for NorthWestern Energy to monitor its success and evaluate its effectiveness. Specific elements needing evaluation include the:

1. Process for decision-making for funding recreation projects within the Corridor.
2. Information and details about recreation projects required for River Fund Board consideration.
3. Plan update procedures.

Recognizing that the process for decision-making on new recreation projects, criteria for project selection, and the application form (as provided in Chapters 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4) are key components for on-going management of recreation resources in the Corridor, regular review of these elements is necessary. Each year, managers provide feedback on the application form, criteria, and scoring to determine if application requirements are adequate for the goals of the process. Revisions to the application form are made as needed based on this feedback as well as feedback from the River Fund Board of Directors. The intent of these regular reviews allows for adjustments to:

1. the scoring ranges,
2. information required on the application form to better address criteria and/or clarification of instructions or form elements.

Updates of the CRP were established at regular intervals that coincide with Visitor Surveys conducted in the Corridor. Updates include revisiting the Issues and Goals for the Corridor to identify whether new ones have evolved, the processes for decision-making, project application, and scoring criteria for effectiveness and consistency with Issues and Goals, and the ROS and LAC indicators and thresholds for possible modification, as deemed appropriate by land managers. Any other Plan elements in need of evaluation and update are also revisited, such as the land use and recreation management plans, population and development information, and recreation amenities and resources as well. The most current results from monitoring efforts are included in each Plan update.

The timeline below (Table 2-5.1) illustrates the inter-relationship and sequential timing of the Visitor Study, Managers' Survey and Visitor Use Counts, filing of FERC Form 80s, and the cycle of Plan updates. Information reported on FERC Form 80s is collected in part through the Visitor Study, the

Visitor Use Counts, and the Managers’ Surveys, all of which guide updates of Plan elements such as Issue Statements and Goals, decision process, and application criteria.

Table 2-5.1: Timeline of Monitoring of Plan Elements																				
Year 20--	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
Visitor Study	*						*						*							
Managers’ Survey	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Visitor Use Counts	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
FERC Form 80s		*						*						*						
Plan Updates		*						*						*						



Overlooks on Ryan Island offer spectacular views of the falls.

Strategies for Adaptive Management

The concept of adaptive management is based on the idea that strategies change as recreation demands, desires, and settings change, or as current strategies prove to be less effective than anticipated at meeting desired conditions and goals. To make the lessons learned by experience most useful, the following management strategies are presented for implementation as needed to address recreation needs under this Plan.

Visitor Activity and Satisfaction Monitoring

Situation and Rationale:

Monitoring activities and satisfaction of visitors to recreation sites in the Corridor has provided beneficial information for managing public recreation resources. When initiated in 1995, the monitoring was set at four-year intervals to correspond with the need for data for FERC reporting (Form 80s were also submitted at four-year intervals). Since not much was known about recreation use within the Corridor at that time, frequent monitoring at four-year intervals helped get a quick handle on visitor use. That interval has since been extended to six years to coincide with FERC Form 80 reporting deadlines.

Completion of five visitor studies in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2008, and 2014 has shown generally stable patterns in the quality of opportunities and amenities (see Appendix B). The relative consistency of visitor survey results for these multiple studies reinforces the validity and reliability of this method for learning about activities, experiences, and characteristics of visitors at public recreation sites.

Strategy:

The interval for the Visitor Study corresponds to the interval for FERC reporting of recreation use and will continue to provide information upon which recreation managers can base decisions.

Monitoring the Volume of Visitor Use

Situation and Rationale:

Monitoring the volume of visitor use of recreation sites in the Corridor was conducted as a component of Visitor Surveys in 1995, 1999, and 2003. However, limited effectiveness of those visitor use estimates provided little understanding of the magnitude or quantity of use (monitoring how many visitors use a site and when). A Visitor Use Counts Study using automatic counters was initiated in 2005 as an annual study to estimate the volume of recreation use at sites in the Corridor. The objectives of the study are to (1) gain an understanding of visitation at public recreation sites within the Missouri-Madison Corridor, and (2) understand use relationships between these public recreation sites in order to estimate use for the entire system. Understanding changes in visitation over time will allow managers to make more informed decisions about development and maintenance of recreation sites in the Corridor. Developing and understanding use relationships between recreation sites allows for continued estimations of use over time without the need to actually count use of each site every year. Visitor use information collected through this study is a key component for reporting on FERC Form 80s.

Strategy:

NorthWestern Energy continues to monitor visitor use of recreation sites in the Corridor annually in order to understand use patterns between sites and in the system as a whole. Results are reported annually to Regional Working Groups.

Resource Monitoring at Developed Recreation Sites

Situation and Rationale:

The Managers' Survey, a resource monitoring effort that collects specific information about developed recreation sites in the Corridor and catalogues that information for use by land managers, was established under the 1996 Plan. Periodic refinements have been made to the survey to make the monitoring effort more effective and useful. Many of the LAC indicators were updated based on data collected from the survey. Reports to land managers highlight recreation site conditions that exceed established indicator thresholds for all sites managed for public recreation and lend support for appropriate management actions to address those undesirable conditions.

Strategy:

NorthWestern Energy and site managers continue to conduct this monitoring annually, and to report results comparing site conditions to indicators and thresholds established under the LAC system in the Plan.

Resource Monitoring at Undeveloped Recreation Sites

Situation and Rationale:

Discussions with recreation managers reveal that while issues and concerns that arise at undeveloped recreation sites are important, they are often quite different than those encountered at developed sites. Also, undeveloped sites are unique and varied across the system, and monitoring conditions of those sites in a standard form similar to the Managers' Survey would be difficult and ineffective.

Strategy:

Some indicators on the Managers' Survey report conditions specifically for sites included in the Undeveloped ROS category, and results are reported annually on those elements. Managers also continue to report issues that arise at undeveloped recreation sites during the spring and fall Regional Working Group meetings and submit applications for River Fund grants, as appropriate, to address those issues.

Shared Resources, Shared Issues

Situation and Rationale:

During the 2005 update of the Plan, committee members identified that there is little knowledge among recreation planners in the Corridor about issues faced by members of the other Missouri-Madison working groups for water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources. It is believed that some of the same issues affect multiple groups and that better communication may lead to more cooperative and comprehensive solutions. Similarly, there is limited information sharing between recreation managers in the Corridor and those associated with the Bureau of Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Project and the State of Montana's Toston Project. While these areas lie outside the Project Area, they are directly adjacent to it and management activities at those projects have the potential to influence visitor use in the Corridor.

Strategy:

Communication and information sharing are encouraged between the Regional Working Groups, the water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources Technical Advisory Committees, and recreation managers at Canyon Ferry Reservoir and the Toston Project on an on-going basis to stay abreast of areas of concern to other resource managers and identify potential cooperative projects.

Landscape Inventory for Open Space and Scenic Values

Situation and Rationale:

Privately-owned agricultural lands in the Corridor provide open spaces, natural-appearing settings and riparian habitats that many recreationists value. It is important for recreation managers and agencies to recognize opportunities to work cooperatively with private landowners and other partners to conserve lands where these values and attributes are still intact, before they are converted to other uses. Certain non-profit organizations, land trusts, and government agencies exist to assist landowners in protecting their property from future development through the establishment of conservation easements.

Strategy:

NorthWestern Energy and partners under this Plan will continue to make available, to the extent possible, time and resources to assist in identifying conservation easement opportunities.

Recreation Issues Affecting Private Landowners

Situation and Rationale:

- Recreation managers recognize that actions of recreationists can impose costs on landowners whose lands border reservoirs and rivers and provide scenic natural settings and open space. These imposed costs can result from actions such as trespass, leaving litter or waste, and leaving livestock gates open.
-

To help identify recreation issues affecting private landowners, NorthWestern Energy conducted outreach meetings for landowners along the Madison and Missouri rivers in the fall of 2005. The purpose of those meetings was to discuss landowner concerns about sources of conflict between landowners and recreationists, and identify potential solutions to address landowner concerns.

Landowner comment identified trespass by recreationists onto private lands as a dominant concern. Trespass can lead to litter, trash and sanitation problems, the spread of weeds, and development of informal use areas where none existed before. Trespass also results in liability concerns for landowners, especially when fires are left unattended, when hunters and river users are in an area at the same time, and when river users are unaware of nearby livestock.

Landowners cited lack of understanding of stream access laws, and a lack of respect for fencing along river corridors. Landowners also noted a possible perception by recreationists that fencing denotes the boundary between public and private lands. Also noted was a lack of understanding among recreationists that existing agricultural and ranch land along rivers and reservoirs provide the valued open space and natural-appearing setting of many viewsheds, and a lack of recognition for stewardship efforts made by landowners.

Landowners offered solutions to help address their concerns that include education and outreach efforts to recognize landowner contributions that provide open space and recreational access in some areas; use of floater guides, maps or an internet visitor guide to educate and inform recreationists, and establishing public-private partnerships to help implement solutions.

Strategy:

As recreation issues and settings change, additional outreach meetings with landowners could identify other solutions to help address conflicts between recreationists and landowners. Specific solutions can be offered as grant request proposals to the Missouri-Madison River Fund.

Chapter 2-6: River Fund Grant Program

The Plan was developed to accommodate and adapt to changing recreation resource conditions and agency and public needs over the 40-year term of the Project 2188 License. As such, the Plan utilizes an adaptive management framework to respond to changing conditions and recreation needs in the Project Area. The River Fund Grant Program was created in 2005 to help fund these changing recreation needs in the Project Area. The program was initiated in 2006, with the first allocation of investment income made in fiscal year³ 2007. This annual process will be used on an on-going basis to identify and address recreation needs through the remaining term of the License (until 2040). From fiscal year 2007 through fiscal year 2017 the program has successfully funded nearly \$7.5 million in recreation improvements, more than \$3.6 million from the River Fund, more than \$1,000,000 from the licensee (now NorthWestern Energy), and more than \$2.7 million from other agency and sponsor organizations. Table 2-6.1 lists River Fund Grant awards for the first 11 years of the program. The application and selection process for submitted projects is described in Chapter 2-2.

FY2007 Awarded Projects	River Fund Award	Licensee Match Award	Agency and Partner Contributions	Total Project Cost
Burnt Tree Hole FAS Boat Ramp Replacement	\$ 17,500	\$ -	\$ 17,500	\$ 35,000
Hebgen Reservoir Bathymetric Map	\$ 19,545	\$ -	\$ 7,750	\$ 27,295
Raynolds' Pass FAS Parking Area and Latrine	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000
Madison River Special Recreation Permit Program	\$ 46,500	\$ 22,500	\$ 90,000	\$ 159,000
Lonesomehurst Boat Ramp	\$ 9,000	\$ -	\$ 9,000	\$ 18,000
Clark's Bay Access Enhancement	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 80,000
Devil's Elbow/Two Camps Chip Sealing	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 75,000
White Sandy - Phase III Improvements	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 95,000
Black Sandy State Park Dump Station Expansion	\$ 15,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000
Causeway FAS Parking Improvements	\$ 10,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 60,000
Giant Springs State Park Fishing Platforms	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 35,000
Mid-Canon FAS Site Improvements	\$ 21,250	\$ -	\$ 45,000	\$ 66,250
River's Edge Trail Resurfacing	\$ 39,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 48,000	\$ 135,000
Widow Coulee FAS Boat Launch Improvements	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ 9,000
Preserving the Trails	\$ 32,500	\$ 29,500	\$ 158,000	\$ 220,000
Missouri-Madison Education and Outreach Program	\$ 40,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000
Total FY2007 Projects	\$ 386,295	\$ 200,000	\$ 578,250	\$1,164,545

³ The River Fund's fiscal year is October 1 – September 30. Grant awards are determined by the River Fund Board in December of each year, and funds are made available the following January.

Table 2-6.1: River Fund Grant Awards FY2007 through FY2017 (continued)				
	River Fund Award	Licensee Match Award	Agency and Partner Contributions	Total Project Cost
FY2008 Awarded Projects				
Canaday Boat Launch Safety Improvements	\$ 12,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 30,000
Burnt Tree Hole FAS Boat Ramp and Site Enhancements	\$ 15,184	\$ 4,816	\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000
Headwaters Trail System - Madison River Bridge	\$ 41,625	\$ 13,875	\$ 125,500	\$ 181,000
Madison River Noxious Weed Control and Education	\$ 44,725	\$ 11,625	\$ 64,250	\$ 120,600
Hebgen Reservoir Shoreline Protection	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$ 24,000
Devil's Elbow Boat Ramp Extension	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000
Lake Helena Fishing Access Site Development	\$ 81,511	\$ 81,511	\$ 65,000	\$ 228,022
Sanders Property Acquisition	\$ 69,500	\$ 69,500	\$ 246,000	\$ 385,000
Total FY2008 Projects	\$ 301,545	\$ 209,327	\$ 597,750	\$1,108,622
FY2009 Awarded Projects				
Windy Point Boat Launch	\$ 80,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 180,000
Cherry Creek Easement Acquisition	\$ 15,513	\$ 5,173	\$ 20,689	\$ 41,375
Sun River Boat Launch	\$ 44,222	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,500	\$ 52,722
Craig FAS Improvements	\$ 56,500	\$ 12,500	\$ 50,000	\$ 119,000
Roe River Bridge Reconstruction	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000
Total FY2009 Projects	\$ 216,235	\$ 60,673	\$ 196,189	\$ 473,097
FY2010 Awarded Projects				
Spring Creek Day Use Development	\$ 7,800	\$ 2,200	\$ 4,000	\$ 14,000
Black Eagle Recreation Area Improvements	\$ 13,750	\$ 1,000	\$ 3,500	\$ 18,250
Roe Island Wall Rehabilitation	\$ 36,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 47,000
Hebgen Reservoir Deepwater Ramp	\$ 64,500	\$ -	\$ 9,000	\$ 73,500
Lonesomehurst Boat Ramp Improvements	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 36,000
MidCanon FAS Parking Area Expansion	\$ 28,750	\$ 1,250	\$ 5,000	\$ 35,000
Hebgen Reservoir Bathymetric Map Printing	\$ 5,700	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 7,700
Pelican Point FAS Access Road Improvements	\$ 38,750	\$ 1,250	\$ 5,000	\$ 45,000
Madison River SRP Expansion	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Total FY2010 Projects	\$ 214,250	\$ 20,700	\$ 51,500	\$ 286,450

Table 2-6.1: River Fund Grant Awards FY2007 through FY2017 (continued)				
	River Fund Award	Licensee Match Award	Agency and Partner Contributions	Total Project Cost
FY2011 Projects				
Damselfly FAS Development	\$ 28,500	\$ 9,500	\$ 38,000	\$ 76,000
Rainbow Point Dock Repair	\$ 5,200	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,800	\$ 8,800
Lonesomehurst Dock	\$ 10,600	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,600	\$ 13,800
Log Gulch and Departure Point Chip Seal	\$ 38,000	\$ 38,000	\$ 38,000	\$ 114,000
York Bridge FAS Dock Replacement	\$ 31,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 33,000
West Bank Park Nonmotorized Boat Launch	\$ 40,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 45,000
Total FY2011 Projects	\$ 153,300	\$ 51,900	\$ 85,400	\$ 290,600
FY2012 Projects				
White Sandy Shoreline Stabilization	\$ 32,000	\$ 32,000	\$ 32,000	\$ 96,000
Rivers Edge Trail Maintenance Plan	\$ 14,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 16,000	\$ 37,500
Wilderness Boat Launch Enhancements	\$ 20,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 28,000	\$ 55,000
Fairweather FAS Site Rehabilitation	\$ 33,750	\$ 6,250	\$ 25,000	\$ 65,000
Hebgen Lake Public Information Signs	\$ 500	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 4,500
Ennis FAS Site Upgrades	\$ 38,750	\$ 6,250	\$ 25,000	\$ 70,000
Black Sandy Pier Replacement	\$ 50,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 70,000
Total FY2012 Projects	\$ 189,000	\$ 71,000	\$ 138,000	\$ 398,000
FY2013 Projects				
Lewis & Clark Overlook Repairs	\$ 3,750	\$ 6,250	\$ 6,250	\$ 16,250
White Sandy Chip Seal	\$ 31,000	\$ 31,000	\$ 31,000	\$ 93,000
Cherry Creek Campground Renovation	\$ 10,600	\$ 8,400	\$ 8,400	\$ 27,400
Giant Springs State Park Steps/railing Repair	\$ 19,500	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 31,500
Greycliff FAS Campground Improvements	\$ 48,579	\$ 11,250	\$ 45,000	\$ 104,829
Broadwater Bay Ramp Replacement	\$ 36,600	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	\$ 45,600
Kirby Area Picnic Table Replacement	\$ 19,335	\$ 2,265	\$ 9,060	\$ 30,660
Headwaters State Park Parking Area Rehab	\$ 77,500	\$ 28,500	\$ 114,000	\$ 220,000
Headwaters State Park Legacy Trail Paving	\$ 69,500	\$ 500	\$ 13,000	\$ 83,000
Madison Byways Recreational Trail	\$ 20,000	\$ 4,725	\$ 188,185	\$ 212,910
Total FY2013 Projects	\$ 336,364	\$ 103,390	\$ 425,395	\$ 865,149

Table 2-6.1: River Fund Grant Awards FY2007 through FY2017 (continued)				
FY2014 Awarded Projects	River Fund Award	NorthWestern Energy Match Award	Agency and Partner Contributions	Total Project Cost
Coulter-Meriwether Dock Replacement	\$ 235,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 268,000
Rainbow Overlook Groundwater Monitoring	\$ 28,361	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 38,361
Clark's Bay Ramp Replacement	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 75,000
Rainbow Point Dock Replacement	\$ 15,150	\$ 2,650	\$ 2,650	\$ 20,450
River's Edge Trail Erosion Repair	\$ 19,100	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,500	\$ 54,100
Kobayashi Parking Expansion	\$ 95,981	\$ 42,859	\$ 42,859	\$ 181,699
North Park Improvements	\$ 71,034	\$ 1,625	\$ 7,500	\$ 80,159
Madison Dam Vault Toilet	\$ 15,778	\$ 125	\$ 2,350	\$ 18,253
Madison Campground Fencing	\$ 14,442	\$ 4,265	\$ 17,060	\$ 35,767
Chief Tendoy Interpretive Site	\$ 27,500	\$ -	\$ 34,500	\$ 62,000
Total FY2014 Projects	\$ 547,346	\$ 114,024	\$ 117,419	\$ 833,789
FY2015 Projects	River Fund Award	NorthWestern Energy Match Award	Agency and Partner Contributions	Total Project Cost
Giant Spring Loop Trail and Stairs	\$ 13,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 57,500	\$ 75,500
Giant Springs Walkway Improvements	\$ 29,300	\$ 5,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 54,300
Ruby Creek Boat Launch	\$ 94,757.50	\$ 3,165	\$ 12,660	\$ 110,583
Widow Coulee Road Enhancement	\$ 148,750	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 198,750
Earthquake Lake Visitor Center Trail Renovation	\$ 67,950	\$ 2,050	\$ 8,200	\$ 78,200
Varney Bridge FAS Boat Ramp	\$ 28,187	\$ 2,563	\$ 10,250	\$ 41,000
West Bank Park Restroom	\$ 101,000	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,500	\$ 118,000
Coulter-Meriwether Dock Replacement Supplement	\$ 100,950	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,950
Total FY2015 Projects	\$583,894.50	\$ 51,278	\$ 142,110	\$777,282.50
FY2016 Projects	River Fund Award	NorthWestern Energy Match Award	Agency and Partner Contributions	Total Project Cost
Rainbow Overlook landslide repair	\$ 102,636	\$ 10,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 124,636
Spring Creek Campground site upgrades	\$ 28,115	\$ 47,561	\$ 47,561	\$ 123,237
Devil's Elbow and Clark's Bay chip sealing	\$ 60,258	\$ 60,258	\$ 60,259	\$ 180,775
Whitmore Bridge replacement	\$ 17,550	\$ 7,950	\$ 12,950	\$ 38,450
Msri Headwaters State Park birding trail	\$ 22,250	\$ 2,750	\$ 26,000	\$ 51,000
Black's Ford FAS latrine replacement	\$ 55,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 80,000
Palisades water system update, phase 1	\$ 64,060	\$ 5,708	\$ 22,832	\$ 92,600
Total FY2016 Projects	\$ 349,869	\$ 139,227	\$ 201,602	\$ 690,698

Table 2-6.1: River Fund Grant Awards FY2007 through FY2017 (continued)				
FY2017 Projects	River Fund Award	NorthWestern Energy Match Award	Agency and Partner Contributions	Total Project Cost
McAtee Bridge FAS boat ramp replacement	\$ 9,057	\$ 2,789	\$ 18,154	\$ 30,000
Giant Springs State Park maintenance bldg	\$ 15,440	\$ 12,000	\$ 17,000	\$ 44,440
Giant Springs State Park electric gate	\$ 6,122	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 28,122
Black Sandy State Park entrance paving	\$ 10,600	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 20,600
Palisades water system, Phase II	\$ 96,300	\$ 8,017	\$ 32,070	\$ 136,387
Hebgen Lake Bathymetric Map printing	\$ 3,260	\$ 1,000	\$ 3,100	\$ 7,360
West Bank Park Trail ADA Improvements	\$ 52,580	\$ 5,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 77,580
RET South Shore Trail Shelter	\$ 2,337	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 5,337
R4 FAS kiosks	\$ 16,875	\$ 3,125	\$ 5,000	\$ 25,000
Causeway FAS site upgrades	\$ 67,552	\$ 5,050	\$ 5,600	\$ 78,202
Fort Benton walking bridge rehab	\$ 83,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 32,000	\$ 123,000
Total FY2017 Projects	\$ 363,123	\$ 62,481	\$ 150,424	\$ 576,028
Total Cumulative Funding Awards FY2007-FY2017	\$ 3,641,222	\$ 1,021,519	\$ 2,739,039	\$ 7,464,261

FY2007 Project Summaries

Burnt Tree Hole FAS Boat Ramp Replacement

Project Summary: Replace dilapidated boat ramp, improve roadways and barriers

Project Purpose: Protect riverbanks from dispersed public use while providing river access for anglers and floaters.

Hebgen Reservoir Bathymetric Map

Project Summary: Produce a bathymetric map for Hebgen Reservoir using GPS and sonar.

Project Purpose: Reduce the potential for boater accidents due to unsafe boating conditions in shoreline areas, bays, and areas near public boat launches due to decreased reservoir levels during summer months.

Raynolds' Pass FAS Parking Area and Latrine

Project Summary: Construct a parking area with latrine on the east side of Hwy 87 in place of a user-pioneered informal parking area. Would include a safe highway approach, short road, and gravel parking lot, all lined with boulders to constrict vehicles to hardened surfaces.

Project Purpose: To formalize access and parking to the area and confine vehicle access to allow revegetation and reduce erosion and sedimentation caused by current use.

Madison River Special Recreation Permit Program

Project Summary: Initiate a Special Recreation Permit program for commercial use, competitive events and organized groups on BLM and FWP lands within the Madison River corridor.

Project Purpose: Improve the ability to monitor and gather user information, reduce and mitigate conflicts between user groups, improve relationships with landowners along the river, manage impacts to resources caused by recreational use, promote responsible use of public land, and raise funds for maintaining recreation facilities and access roads.

Lonesomehurst Boat Ramp Repair

Project Summary: Refurbish old boat ramp.

Project Purpose: Ensure safe boat launching all season, curtail use of a non-designated launch site, and avoid future shoreline damage.

Clark's Bay Access Enhancement

Project Summary: Asphalt pave two parking areas and swim beach trails and chip seal two parking areas.

Project Purpose: Complete planned development (previously prevented by funding shortfall), enhance universal accessibility, protect water quality from erosion and run-off, meet new fee site requirement under FLREA, and protect investment by extending the life of the asphalt.

Devil's Elbow/Two Camps Chip Sealing

Project Summary: Chip seal all existing asphalt surfaces (roadways and parking lots) within the Devil's Elbow and Two Camps sites.

Project Purpose: Maintain asphalt surfaces in good condition and protect substantial past investments by extending the life of the existing pavement 8-10 years.

White Sandy – Phase III Improvements

Project Summary: Final improvement work for White Sandy.

Project Purpose: Complete development in order to open the new site by Memorial Day Weekend 2007 and fulfill mandates established by FERC under Project #2188 and agreements between BLM and FWP.

Black Sandy State Park Dump Station Expansion

Project Summary: Install a large pumpable RV sewage dump station.

Project Purpose: Expand on the existing RV dump station in order to accommodate anticipated use from White Sandy campground beginning in 2007 and avoid a raw sewage crisis.

Causeway FAS Parking Improvements

Project Summary: Rebuild and widen the pull-off shoulder parking area along the south side of the Causeway Fishing Access Site.

Project Purpose: Safety for bank fishers (would deter parking in driving lanes), decreased bank erosion into Lake Helena, increased fish habitat.

Giant Springs State Park Fishing Platforms

Project Summary: Install five ADA accessible fishing platforms at the Children's Fishing Pond.

Project Purpose: Provide safe access to the fishing pond for children and the handicapped public and mitigate current soil compaction, soil erosion, and loss of vegetative cover due to use of the site.

Mid Canon FAS Improvements

Project Summary: Enhance the design, layout, and facilities, including asphalt paving the access road, installing a new ADA vault toilet, relocating existing vault toilet, and designating boat trailer parking area and camping sites.

Project Purpose: Mitigate landowner concerns of traffic and road dust, reduce frequency of flooding of existing vault toilet, provide an additional toilet nearer boat launch area, protect riparian areas from impacts to soil, vegetation, and trees as a result of camping.

River's Edge Trail Resurfacing

Project Summary: Install 9,400 linear feet of asphalt overlay, repair a 10x40 foot section of slumped trail, and re-establish the yellow centerline stripe.

Project Purpose: Mitigate against numerous problems and safety concerns associated with cracking and surface degradation noted in on-site inspection.

Widow Coulee FAS Boat Launch Improvements

Project Summary: Install a rock barb just upstream of the concrete boat launch.

Project Purpose: Redirect the current of the Missouri River to enhance the public's ability to safely launch boats.

Preserving the Trails

Project Summary: Purchase and acquisition of three subdivided parcels of land along the north shore of the Missouri River, directly across from the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, that were listed for sale in early Spring 2006.

Project Purpose: Preserve the viewshed from the Interpretive Center and Giant Springs State Park, provide a key link for expansion of the River's Edge Trail on the north bank, provide for public access of the site, and prevent unwanted development.

Missouri-Madison River Education & Outreach

Project Summary: Production of a multi-faceted public education and outreach program.

Project Purpose: Encourage responsible river recreation and promote resource stewardship on the Missouri-Madison River corridors

FY2008 Project Summaries

Canaday Boat Launch Safety Improvements

Project Summary: Remove existing "beaverslide" style boat ramp and replace with a standard back-in boat ramp.

Project Purpose: To address safety concerns and ensure safe boat launching.

Burnt Tree Hold FAS Boat Ramp and Site Enhancements

Project Summary: Relocate and rebuild boat ramp and perform site upgrades. Engineering assessment identified greater rehabilitation needs than anticipated with 2006 application.

Project Purpose: Protect shoreline from erosion and impacts due to launching at non-designated spots and provide quality recreational access and facilities along the Madison River.

Headwaters Trail System, Madison River Bridge

Project Summary: Construct pedestrian bridge across the Madison River.

Project Purpose: To adjoin two recreational trail systems in the Three Forks and Missouri Headwaters State Park areas.

Madison River Noxious Weed Control and Education Project

Project Summary: Program to address noxious weed control and prevention along the Madison River below Hebgen Lake to Black's Ford FAS by treating the river corridor, Fishing Access Sites, and Ennis Lake, by contributing to the Madison River Pilot Grazing Project, and by providing educational materials and training days.

Project Purpose: To treat, prevent, and educate recreationists about noxious weed control.

Hebgen Reservoir Shoreline Protection

Project Summary: Designated camp spots in dispersed camping areas along the West shore of Hebgen Lake.

Project Purpose: Phase I of a two-phase project to address impacts from dispersed camping. Designating campsites in previously dispersed use areas will help address soils impacts, destruction of lakeshore vegetation, and degradation of riparian habitat.

Devil's Elbow Boat Ramp Extension

Project Summary: Upgrade the existing concrete boat ramp by extending its length under water by 20 feet.

Project Purpose: To permanently correct safety hazards, trailer property damages, siltation problems, and frequent maintenance costs.

Lake Helena Fishing Access Site Development

Project Summary: Develop a Fishing Access Site for recreational access on the North shore of Lake Helena.

Project Purpose: To provide recreational access to Lake Helena, where there is currently no formal access point other than the Causeway and no designated boat launch.

Sanders Property Acquisition

Project Summary: Reimburse the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation for a portion of the purchase price of the Sanders property, a 2.5-acre home site directly across the Missouri River from the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center.

Project Purpose: Project assists in the purchase of the property and demolition of the home.

FY2009 Project Summaries

Windy Point Boat Launch

Project Summary: The project would develop a site to address user-pioneered parking and boat launching as well as safety issues on the upper Madison River. Site improvements would include a gravel access road, parking area, concrete boat ramp, vault toilet, boat tie-off area, information signs, and vehicle barriers as needed.

Project Purpose: To continue to allow public use while meeting safety standards for the access road and boat launch.

Cherry Creek Easement Acquisition

Project Summary: This project would assist with purchase of a perpetual easement on a 2.25-acre parcel on the lower Madison River from DNRC to allow future recreation development and site management by FWP/BLM.

Project Purpose: To address on-going dispersed and unmanaged public use on this State trust parcel.

Sun River Boat Launch

Project Summary: This project would develop a carry-in boat launch facility on city-owned property on the Sun River near Great Falls, providing for a float terminating at Oddfellows Park Take-Out Ramp on the Missouri River. Site improvements would include a ramp, access road, parking area, and post and cable barriers.

Project Purpose: Provide currently unavailable access for non-motorized boating on the lower Sun River.

Craig FAS Improvements

Project Summary: This project would allow improvement of existing campsites, creation of a camp host pad, and paving of the parking area. Night lighting would be added to address public safety.

Project Purpose: To increase the management presence for fee collection and adherence to posted regulations, and to address on-going dust problems during summer months.

Roe River Bridge Reconstruction

Project Summary: This project would remove an existing deteriorated and failing footbridge in Giant Springs State Park, replacing it with a new footbridge that retains the original historic character.

Project Purpose: To maintain the original circulation pattern of the park, continue to meet ADA requirements and provide universal accessibility for park visitors.

FY2010 Project Summaries

Spring Creek Day Use Development

Project Summary: This project includes improvement of a parking area, construction of a footpath and access trail for launching small non-motorized watercraft, and installing picnic tables and signage in a shoreline area that has been impacted from motor vehicles. The area was recently closed to motor vehicles and camping.

Project Purpose: To provide alternative water access for day users and small, hand-launched watercraft adjacent to a camping area.

Black Eagle Memorial Island Improvement Project

Project Summary: This project would place an asphalt overlay on a 90-foot section of railroad track imbedded in the roadway at Black Eagle Island. The track currently poses a safety hazard to trail users and creates problems for winter snow plowing. The project would also add a handicap accessible public drinking fountain near an existing parking area and picnic shelter.

Project Purpose: To address a safety issue (imbedded railroad tracks) and provide drinking water for site visitors.

Roe Island Rock Wall Rehabilitation Project

Project Summary: The project would allow for rehabilitation work to the retaining wall around Roe Island at Giant Springs State Park. Deterioration of the wall and loss of material behind the wall is causing slumping of the island turf, which poses a safety concern to site visitors.

Project Purpose: To repair the wall and underlying material to ensure public safety and continued access to Roe Island. Completing the project in conjunction with a reservoir drawdown scheduled for the upcoming Rainbow Powerhouse Redevelopment Project would result in significant cost savings over doing the project at a later date as there will be no need to dewater the area around the wall to perform the rehab.

Hebgen Reservoir Deepwater Boat Ramp

Project Summary: This project would fund a boat ramp extension at a private marina on the north shore of Hebgen Lake, which would allow for public boat launching during low water conditions.

Project Purpose: To ensure public boat access to Hebgen Lake during years when low water conditions occur.

Lonesomehurst Boat Ramp Improvement

Project Summary: This application is a submission for additional funding to complete boat ramp improvements following design and engineering review. The project would repair an existing boat ramp at Lonesomehurst Campground. The ramp is the only public boat launch on the west shore of Hebgen Lake.

Project Purpose: To address unsafe ramp conditions at an existing launch facility and extend the use period for launching.

Mid-Canon FAS Parking Improvement Project

Project Summary: This project would expand this heavily-used site's gravel parking areas and delineate parking slots for site visitors and shuttle vehicles.

Project Purpose: To accommodate growing public use of the site in a safe and organized manner.

Hebgen Reservoir Bathymetric Map Printing

Project Summary: This project would fund printing of 5,000 copies of the Hebgen Lake Bathymetric & Recreation Facilities Map.

Project Purpose: To cover additional map printing after a significant cost increase was incurred during the first run of the project.

Pelican Point Road Rebuild

Project Summary: This project would rebuild approximately one-half mile of the road with appropriate sub-base and top gravel layer, install culverts, and construct drainage ditches along both flanks of the access road at Pelican Point FAS.

Project Purpose: To upgrade the existing road with a proper sub-base to support long-term road grading and maintenance.

Madison River Special Recreation Permit Program Expansion

Project Summary: The project would expand the SRP program by funding a year-round river ranger position through the end of the biennium (June 2011) and providing watercraft for conducting river patrols.

Project Purpose: To carry the program through the last year of the current biennium with a full-time river ranger and watercraft.

FY2011 Project Summaries

Damselfly FAS development

Project Summary: Develop basic facilities at Damselfly FAS on the lower Madison River, including signage, entrance road and parking area improvements, and installation of a latrine and concrete boat ramp.

Project Purpose: To facilitate angling and recreation activities while accommodating existing use and protecting the resource.

Rainbow Point Dock Repair

Project Summary: Construct a non-floating, fixed dock hinged to the existing floating dock to allow movement of sand along the shoreline and beneath the new fixed dock.

Project Purpose: This will prevent the floating dock from settling on uneven ground surfaces when Hebgen Lake levels drop.

Lonesomehurst dock

Project Summary: Install a boat dock adjacent to the new boat ramp.

Project Purpose: To create a safe, efficient, and convenient structure and to alleviate issues during boat launching related to prominent winds at the site.

Log Gulch and Departure Point chip seal

Project Summary: Chip seal all existing asphalt surfaces (including all roadways and parking lots, a total of 25,835 sq yds) at Log Gulch, Departure Point, and the portion of the Beartooth Road that connects the two sites on the shoreline of Holter Lake.

Project Purpose: Maintain asphalt surfaces in good condition and protect substantial past investments by extending the life of the existing pavement 8-10 years.

York Bridge FAS dock replacement

Project Summary: Replace a dilapidated 40-foot floating dock with a new 8' x 60' roll-in dock.

Project Purpose: The new dock will be easier to install and will provide additional dock length and width to increase accessibility, public safety, and user satisfaction.

West Bank Park boat launch

Project Summary: Install a carry-in boat launch for use by small non-motorized watercraft at West Bank Park in Great Falls.

Project Purpose: To provide launching facility on the west shoreline; only existing opportunities are along east shoreline.

FY2012 Project Summaries

White Sandy shoreline stabilization

Project Summary: Install core rock, gravel, and riprap along the northeast shoreline of White Sandy Recreation Area. Additional benefit is creation of a 12-foot-wide walkway along the shoreline.

Project Purpose: To stabilize the shoreline that has been aggressively eroded by wave action.

River's Edge Trail maintenance plan

Project Summary: Produce a formal maintenance plan for the River's Edge Trail, including a trail and facility inventory, identification of the entity that owns each segment/facility, and maintenance goals for those facilities and segments.

Project Purpose: To ensure common goals among stakeholders and long-term maintenance of the trail system.

Wilderness Boat Launch enhancements

Project Summary: Install rollers on metal rails of the existing ramp, pour concrete beneath and alongside the ramp, and widen the pull-out area near the ramp.

Project Purpose: To improve an existing ramp that provides floater access to the Madison River and Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness, to improve the safety for recreationists using the ramp, and reduce congestion and conflict between recreationists and powerhouse employees.

Fairweather FAS site rehabilitation

Project Summary: Repair and re-establish internal roadways, parking areas, and boat ramp.

Project Purpose: To rehabilitate the site, which was damaged by flood waters in spring 2011.

Hebgen Lake public information signs

Project Summary: Construct and install 27 information boards at public access sites around Hebgen Lake.

Project Purpose: To provide organized and centralized distribution of information to the recreating public.

Ennis FAS site upgrades

Project Summary: Rebuild and relocate the site access road, which will include installation of a concrete ford.

Project Purpose: To alleviate annual site damage and washing of access road due to flooding and ice gouging.

Black Sandy pier replacement

Project Summary: Replace an ADA-accessible fishing pier.

Project Purpose: The existing pier is slumping into the water and limiting use.

FY2013 Project Summaries

Lewis and Clark Overlook Repairs

Project Summary: Replace site amenities that were removed due to the landslide that began in 2009, including interpretive panels, a picnic table and pavilion, and three benches.

Project Purpose: To provide seating and picnic facilities with ADA-accessibility.

White Sandy Chip Seal

Project Summary: Chip seal all existing asphalt surfaces at White Sandy and a portion of the Hauser Dam Road.

Project Purpose: To extend the life the existing asphalt surfaces at White Sandy Recreation Area.

Cherry Creek Campground Renovation

Project Summary: Renovate Cherry Creek Campground on Hebgen Lake.

Project Purpose: To improve and increase camping opportunities at the site, as well as facilitate fishing, primitive boat launching, and picnicking while protecting natural resources.

Giant Springs State Park Sandstone Steps and Railing Rehabilitation

Project Summary: Rehabilitate historic steps and railing in Giant Springs State Park.

Project Purpose: To stop deterioration of the sandstone steps and railing, remove safety hazards, restore integrity, and increase accessibility.

Greycliff FAS Campground Improvements

Project Summary: Improve and expand camping opportunities at the southern camping area of the site and provide walk-in access to the day use area.

Project Purpose: To protect resources and increase recreational opportunities.

Broadwater Bay Ramp Replacement

Project Summary: Replace the 33-year-old deteriorated boat ramp with a 30' x 50' push-in concrete slab.

Project Purpose: To improve accessibility for motorized and nonmotorized boats.

Kirby Area picnic table replacement

Project Summary: Install picnic tables with new, ADA-accessible tables at Riverview Campground and the Kirby and Eagles Nest Day Use Areas.

Project Purpose: To replace 18 tables that were removed due to deteriorated conditions.

Headwaters State Park parking area rehabilitation

Project Summary: Remove a 30-year-old asphalt surface, repair the failed subbase, and re-asphalt surface at Headwaters State Park.

Project Purpose: To rehabilitate the existing parking area at the primary day use and interpretive areas of the park.

Headwaters State Park Legacy Trail paving

Project Summary: Pave a 3,800-foot section of the Legacy Trail in Missouri Headwaters State Park.

Project Purpose: To link the park to the existing Headwaters Trail System and provide a safer, off-highway route for bicyclists.

Madison Byways Golf Course Connection Trail

Project Summary: Construct the 6-foot wide elevated, concrete Golf Course Connection Trail

Project Purpose: To provide a non-motorized access route between the northeast section of Ennis and other routes that provide access to the Madison River shoreline.

FY2014 Project Summaries

Meriwether-Coulter Dock System Replacement

Project Summary: Replacement of failing dock systems at the Meriwether Picnic Area and Coulter Campground, which are project 2188 sites located in the Gates of the Mountains area on Holter Lake. The main point of entry to the sites is by water, so adequate docking is a necessity for the general public as well as the Gates of the Mountains, Inc. tour boat company permitted by the Forest Service to use the site. The new systems will be permanent, year-round structures that are ADA compliant.

Project Purpose: To provide safe, reliable public access to this popular recreation site from the waterway.

Rainbow Scenic Overlook Landslide Monitoring

Project Summary: Install ground water monitoring equipment and slope inclinometers at the scenic overlook (a project 2188 site). Project includes monitoring only; mitigation options will be examined though not funded under this project.

Project Purpose: To determine causes of and appropriate mitigation options for a landslide that is threatening the overlook parking area and interpretive platform.

Clark's Bay Boat Ramp Modification

Project Summary: Replacement of the existing boat ramp at this project 2188 site on Hauser Reservoir, which is a series of interconnected concrete slabs. The new ramp will be a reinforced monolithic concrete ramp.

Project Purpose: To mitigate for damage caused by annual ice buildup, which relocates the existing ramp slabs each winter.

Rainbow Point Dock Floating Section Replacement

Project Summary: Replacement of the deteriorating floating dock sections at this 2188 site with new EZ Dock floating sections that will be anchored to a fixed pier that was constructed with a FY2011 River Fund grant.

Project Purpose: To provide safe and secure docking and as well as resource protection.

River's Edge Trail Drop-Off Repairs

Project Summary: Repair the dropped-off shoulder areas and sloughing sections of the project 2188 portion of the River's Edge Trail on the south shoreline of Black Eagle and Rainbow Reservoirs in Great Falls.

Project Purpose: To provide safe surfaces for trail users.

Kobayashi Beach Parking Lot

Project Summary: Construct a 22-space parking lot on BLM land across the county road from this highly used project 2188 site. Parking congestion has increased in recent years and has created safety issues on the county access road.

Project Purpose: To reduce congestion and improve emergency access on the county road and throughout the site.

North Park Improvements

Project Summary: Construct a walking path, picnic pavilion, and climbing wall at this project 2188 site. The path will tie into an existing trail that provides access to the site but currently has no walking surface beyond the entrance. The path will be ADA accessible and the pavilion will provide a destination location for visitors and events.

Project Purpose: To expand recreation opportunities and provide additional facilities for recreationists.

Madison Dam Vault Toilet

Project Summary: Install a vault toilet near a popular parking area below Madison Dam where no restroom facilities are available. The BLM will maintain this vault along with others in the canyon area.

Project Purpose: To address sanitation issues that have arisen due to lack of restroom facilities.

Madison River Campground Fence Replacement

Project Summary: Replace deteriorated barbed-wire fencing at a campground along the Madison River with a new jack-leg fence and address some brush clearing needs.

Project Purpose: To better delineate the recreation use areas and allow for more effective closure of the site upon bear sightings and safety issues. Brush clearing will increase visibility and reduce chance bear encounters.

Chief Tendoy Memorial Interpretive Site

Project Summary: Construct a gazebo and install five interpretive panels at this new interpretive site located on the south shoreline of Ennis Lake.

Project Purpose: To interpret the life of Chief Tendoy and the Shoshone-Bannock Indian tribe.

FY2015 Project Summaries

Giant Spring Loop Trail and Stairs

Project Summary: Overlay a deteriorated segment of trail with asphalt and construct stairs to link parking areas near the intersection of Giant Springs Road to the trail and provide access to riverfront lands and the Steamboat Island Trailhead.

Project Purpose: To increase public safety on a deteriorated section of trail and provide access to a loop trail section and shoreline areas.

Giant Springs Walkway Improvements

Project Summary: Replace an existing walkway to reduce the grade, remove steps, and move it away from a congestion area near a play structure. This walkway will also be the final link in a 2.1-mile loop

trail that connects the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and the FWP Region 4 Headquarter through Giant Springs State Park.

Project Purpose: Improve safety for trail and playground users and improve access to the loop trail.

Ruby Creek Boat Launch

Project Summary: Replace an existing single-wide plank-style concrete boat ramp with a double-wide cement slab ramp.

Project Purpose: To improve boat launching facilities and finalize a \$1.6 million upgrade project conducted by the BLM.

Widow Coulee Road Enhancement

Project Summary: Improve the access road with a new design to reduce the grade and improve runoff and drainage.

Project Purpose: To improve safety and access for site users and reduce ongoing maintenance costs for managers.

Earthquake Lake Visitor Center Trail Renovation

Project Summary: Upgrade the trail between the newly remodeled Earthquake Lake Visitor Center, the Memorial and Sister Boulders, and the Madison Valley Overlook.

Project Purpose: To reduce existing steep grades, install new surfacing, and improve accessibility as the final step in a \$1.5 million site upgrade project conducted by the USFS.

Varney Bridge FAS Boat Ramp

Project Summary: Replace a culvert at the access road and replace the boat ramp.

Project Purpose: To prevent flooding of the site and to facilitate safer launching and prevent future damage to user equipment by the current ramp.

West Bank Park Restroom

Project Summary: Install a restroom near the non-motorized boat launch at West Bank Park.

Project Purpose: To serve users of the park, River's Edge Trail and folf course, and provide facilities to accommodate use of the site for special events.

FY2016 Project Summaries

Rainbow Overlook Landslide Repair

Project Summary: Rehabilitate and reconstruct the Rainbow Overlook, which will remove 1,670 cubic yards of overburden that was added during initial site construction, redesign and reduce the amount of parking at the site, and intall drainage trenches to route groundwater away from the overlook.

Project Purpose: The repair project will address a recurring slump that is threatening the parking area and interpretive platform, and creating a safety hazard.

Spring Creek Campground Renovation

Project Summary: Renovate Spring Creek Campground, including signage, road repair, delineation of use areas, addition of a host site, vault toilet, bear-proof food storage boxes and other improvements.

Project Purpose: To improve visitor experiences at the site and protect shoreline and natural resources from destruction.

Devil's Elbow and Clark's Bay Chip Sealing

Project Summary: Chip seal all existing asphalt surfaces at the Devil's Elbow and Clark's Bay recreation sites.

Project Purpose: To protect and prolong the life of existing asphalt at the sites.

Whitmore Bridge Rehabilitation

Project Summary: Rehabilitate a pedestrian access bridge that provides access to 300 acres of open space and recreation trails. Project will install concrete footers, steel stringers, bar grating, and will stabilize the stream bank.

Project Purpose: Rehabilitate an existing structure that was placed temporarily 12 years ago.

Missouri Headwaters State Park Birding Trail

Project Summary: Purchase and install amenities for new pedestrian trail constructed for birding and other activities. Amenities include benches, picnic tables, signage and a pavilion.

Project Purpose: Collaborative project to construct a trail with neighboring landowner and add trail amenities.

Black's Ford FAS Latrine Replacement

Project Summary: Replace two single-vault latrines with two double-vault latrines.

Project Purpose: To provide facilities that efficiently and adequately serve this heavily-used recreation site.

Palisades Water System, Phase 1

Project Summary: Locate and drill a new well to replace the old well that was contaminated and has been turned off.

Project Purpose: The first of two phases to establish a new source of drinking water and then connect the new well to the existing delivery system.

FY2017 Project Summaries

McAtee Bridge FAS boat ramp replacement

Project Summary: Remove the existing 35' x 20' slab-style boat ramp and replace it with a 50' x 20' push-in ramp.

Project Purpose: The concrete slabs of the existing 27-year-old ramp have become unstable and are fracturing and separating, damaging user vehicles and trailers.

Giant Springs State Park maintenance building

Project Summary: Construction of a new equipment and maintenance building behind the Ranger Station in the State Park for storage of equipment and use by maintenance staff.

Project Purpose: To increase the efficiency at which the 4,600-acre park is operated.

Giant Springs State Park electric gate

Project Summary: Purchase and install an automatic electric gate to open the State Park at sunrise and close it at sunset.

Project Purpose: To protect resources and reduce occurrences of public access and vandalism within the park during night time hours.

Black Sandy State Park entrance paving

Project Summary: Paving of the entrance road to Black Sandy State Park.

Project Purpose: To eliminate problems related to washouts and rutting of the road resulting from run-off, and increase ease and safety of users as they enter and leave the site.

Palisades Water System, Phase 2

Project Summary: Connect water from new well (completed under phase 1) to the existing water delivery system and implement additional improvements.

Project Purpose: To re-establish the drinking water system at the site.

Hebgen Lake Bathymetric Map printing

Project Summary: Printing of 7,500 copies of the updated Hebgen Lake Bathymetric map.

Project Purpose: To supply a cost-free reference guide to the recreating public.

West Bank Park Trail ADA improvements

Project Summary: Realign and replace 880 linear feet of deteriorated asphalt trail at West Bank Park.

Project Purpose: To improve the uneven and cracked surface for wheeled trail users, wheelchairs, etc.

RET South Shore trail shelter

Project Summary: Construct an emergency shelter near the midpoint of the 11.5-mile single track trail between Rainbow Dam and Box Elder Creek at an intersection of three main trails in the area.

Project Purpose: The shelter will include a picnic table and will serve as an emergency and non-emergency shelter, as well as a landmark for rescue operations.

R4 FAS kiosks

Project Summary: Purchase and install maintenance-free metal kiosks at four fishing access sites on the Missouri River.

Project Purpose: To reduce maintenance needs for kiosks and concentrate informational signage displayed at the sites.

Causeway FAS site upgrades

Project Summary: Upgrade the FAS with a new picnic shelter, sun shelters, parking and latrine improvements, information kiosk and vegetation planting.

Project Purpose: To improve existing amenities and add new amenities for public use at the FAS.

Fort Benton walking bridge rehabilitation

Project Summary: Replace the decking and support stringers on the first span of the historic Fort Benton walking bridge, as well as perform repairs to the pier included in the span.

Project Purpose: To replace deteriorated components of the most heavily used portion of the walking bridge.

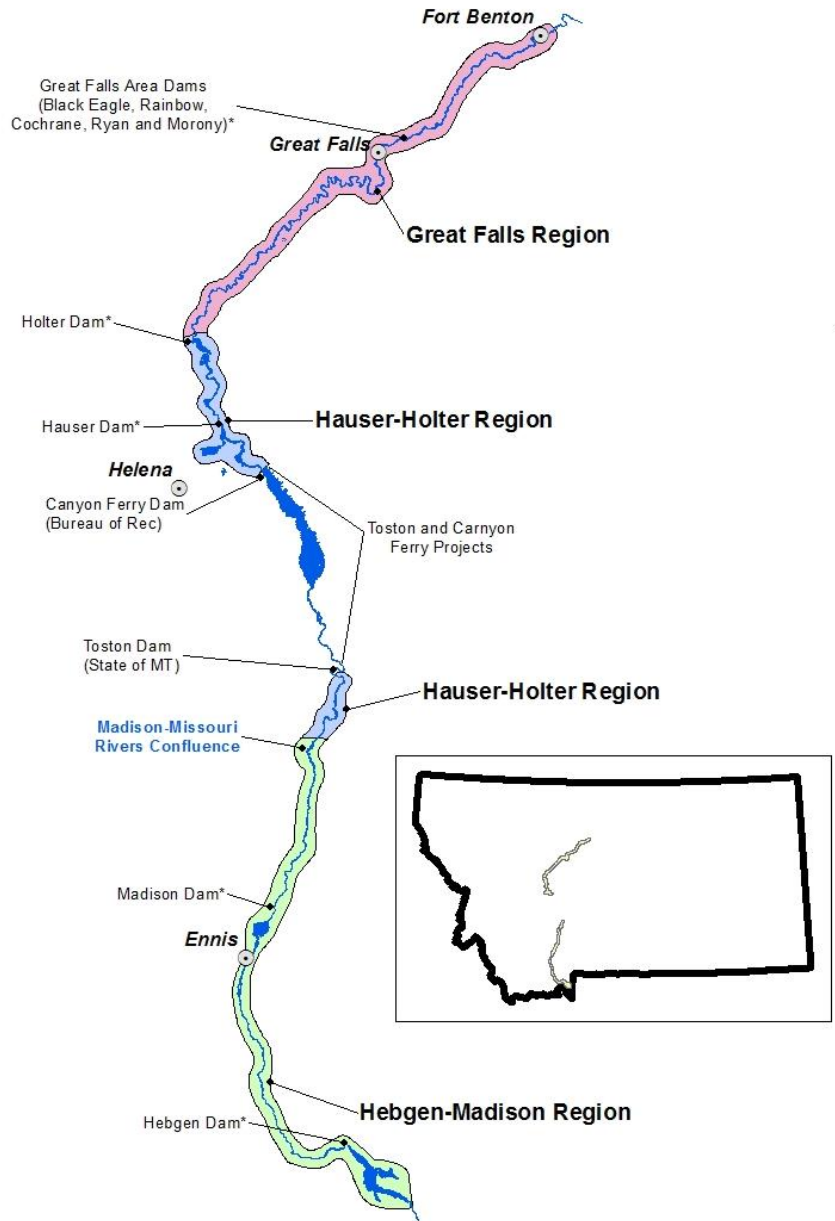
Chapter 3: Corridor Resources

This chapter provides an overall summary of Corridor resources as they pertain to and influence recreation. The first two sections of this chapter provide information regarding where the Missouri-Madison River Corridor is located and a description of its physical setting and character. The third and fourth sections focus on land use and recreation management, as well as influences of resident population and development in the Corridor. The fifth section delves into the recreation amenities and resources available in the Corridor, and the last section provides discussion about recreation use and visitation trends.

Chapter 3-1: Corridor Definition

The Corridor is defined as the Madison and Missouri River reaches and NorthWestern Energy's nine dams and reservoirs from Hebgen Reservoir downstream to Fort Benton. The Corridor boundary extends approximately one mile from the bank on each side of the reservoirs and river segments along 320 river miles and encompasses approximately 651,811 acres of land and surface water, or approximately 1,018 square miles. Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Toston Reservoir, and the river segment between are not included as part of the recreation planning effort of this Plan, as they are administered by the Bureau of Reclamation and the State of Montana, respectively.

The Corridor is divided into three regions based on geographical features, public road access, agency jurisdictional boundaries, and recreational use patterns. The Hebgen-Madison Region is the uppermost section of the Project Area and includes Hebgen Reservoir downstream to Headwaters State Park near Three Forks. The Hauser/Holter Region is the middle portion of the Project Area and begins below Headwaters State Park and continues to Holter Dam. The Great Falls Region is the lower section of the Project Area and includes the area from Holter Dam downstream to Fort Benton.



Chapter 3-2: Physical Setting and Resources

The Corridor is located within the broad mountain valleys and rolling grassland plains of west central Montana. A few miles northwest of West Yellowstone, Montana, Hebgen Dam creates 17-mile-long Hebgen Reservoir on the uppermost section of the Madison River that lies outside of Yellowstone National Park. The Hebgen area is a forested, mountain landscape with open, grassy parklands on more exposed sites. Soils in the area are particularly rich in nutrients. Water released from Hebgen Dam flows 68.8 river miles to Madison Dam, behind which Ennis Reservoir is positioned along 2.5 river miles. As the river flows northward from Hebgen toward Madison Dam, it passes through broad valleys between rolling foothills backed by the Gravelly Range on the west and the Madison Range on the east. Near the north end, the river valley flattens out into an open sagebrush grassland and the Madison River becomes a braided stream, converging with scores of perennial streams from both east and west. Big game species in the area include mule deer, whitetail deer, elk, antelope, moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, bison, grizzly bear, and black bear. A variety of waterfowl and raptor species are common, including bald eagles, trumpeter and tundra swans, osprey, ducks, Canada geese, sandhill cranes, and American white pelicans. Several species of raptors inhabit the Madison area, while beaver are the main furbearer. Principal game fish species include brown trout, rainbow trout, cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish, Arctic grayling, white sucker, longnose sucker, Utah chub, longnose dace, and brook trout. The Madison River below Hebgen Dam is classified as a Class 1 fishery, the highest value fishery resource.

Below Madison Dam, the Bear Trap Canyon brings the Madison River into a tight, steep sided canyon before broadening out again into braided segments. Water released from Madison Dam flows 40.2 miles downstream to the Missouri River headwaters at Three Forks, Montana. Here the Madison joins the Jefferson and Gallatin Rivers to form the Missouri River. The upper part of the Corridor ends above the largest reservoir on the upper Missouri River, Canyon Ferry Reservoir.

North of Canyon Ferry Dam the Project Area begins again with the largest flatwater segment of the Project Area at the Hauser and Holter complex. Hauser Reservoir is situated along approximately 14 river miles; inflows are regulated by Canyon Ferry Dam. Lake Helena forms the southwest arm of Hauser Reservoir but is isolated by a small causeway. These reservoirs are in a portion of the river valley that is tightly constricted on the east side by mountains in the Helena National Forest with rolling plains and valleys on the west side until the river flows through a four-mile canyon before emptying into Holter Reservoir, approximately 28 river miles downstream of Hauser Dam. The river enters the tight canyon section through lower Holter before the oxbow sections surrounded by rolling hills.

The landscape in this region is dominated by ponderosa pine and grasslands. Big game species include whitetail and mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, mountain goat, black bear, and mountain lion. A number of waterfowl species are found in the area, both seasonally and year-round, as well as abundant raptor populations, furbearers, and predator species. Ten game fish species reside in Hauser and Holter Reservoirs.

FWP administers the Beartooth Wildlife Management Area, adjacent to 12 miles of the east shore of Holter Reservoir, in addition to 157 acres in the Hauser area known as the Lake Helena Wildlife Management Area.

Below Holter Reservoir, the river shifts to the northeast, passing out of the Rocky Mountains and transitioning into the Great Plains. The Missouri flows 93 river miles from Holter Dam to Black Eagle Dam, the first of five dams in the Great Falls area. The area from Holter Dam to Craig is known for its natural beauty, rocky precipices and outcrops, and steeply sided valley walls. The river below Craig meanders through the rolling prairies of northern Montana to Great Falls, where it enters a broad canyon

and passes through a series of five dams that occupy former falls of the Missouri. Rainbow Dam is located 3 river miles downstream from Black Eagle Dam, which Cochrane Dam and Ryan Dam are located another four and five river miles downstream, respectively. Morony Dam, the last in the corridor, is located 5 miles downstream of Ryan Dam. From Great Falls to Fort Benton, the Missouri River flows for approximately 32 miles through rolling grassland sections of the northern Great Plains. The general vegetation type of the area is the Teton-Judith Basin Grassland, where terrestrial habitats support big game (principally mule deer and antelope), raptors, and waterfowl, in addition to many species of upland birds. The section between Morony Dam and Fort Benton represents a major seasonal waterfowl concentration area. Twenty species of fish are found between Holter Dam and Great Falls, with the reach between Holter Dam and the town of Cascade rated as a Class I Sport Fishery.



Ennis Reservoir at Clute's Landing boat launch.

Chapter 3-3: Land Use and Recreation Management

The Corridor contains more than 760,000 acres of private and public land that lie adjacent to the rivers and reservoirs. Seventy-two percent of Corridor lands are private, leaving 28 percent managed by numerous public agencies. The following government jurisdictions, counties, cities, and towns are within the Corridor:

- Custer-Gallatin National Forest
- Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- Helena National Forest
- Lewis and Clark National Forest
- Bureau of Land Management (Butte, Dillon, and Central Montana District Office)
- Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Gallatin County
- Madison County
- Broadwater County
- Lewis and Clark County
- Cascade County
- Chouteau County
- Town of Ennis
- Town of Cascade
- City of Great Falls
- Town of Fort Benton

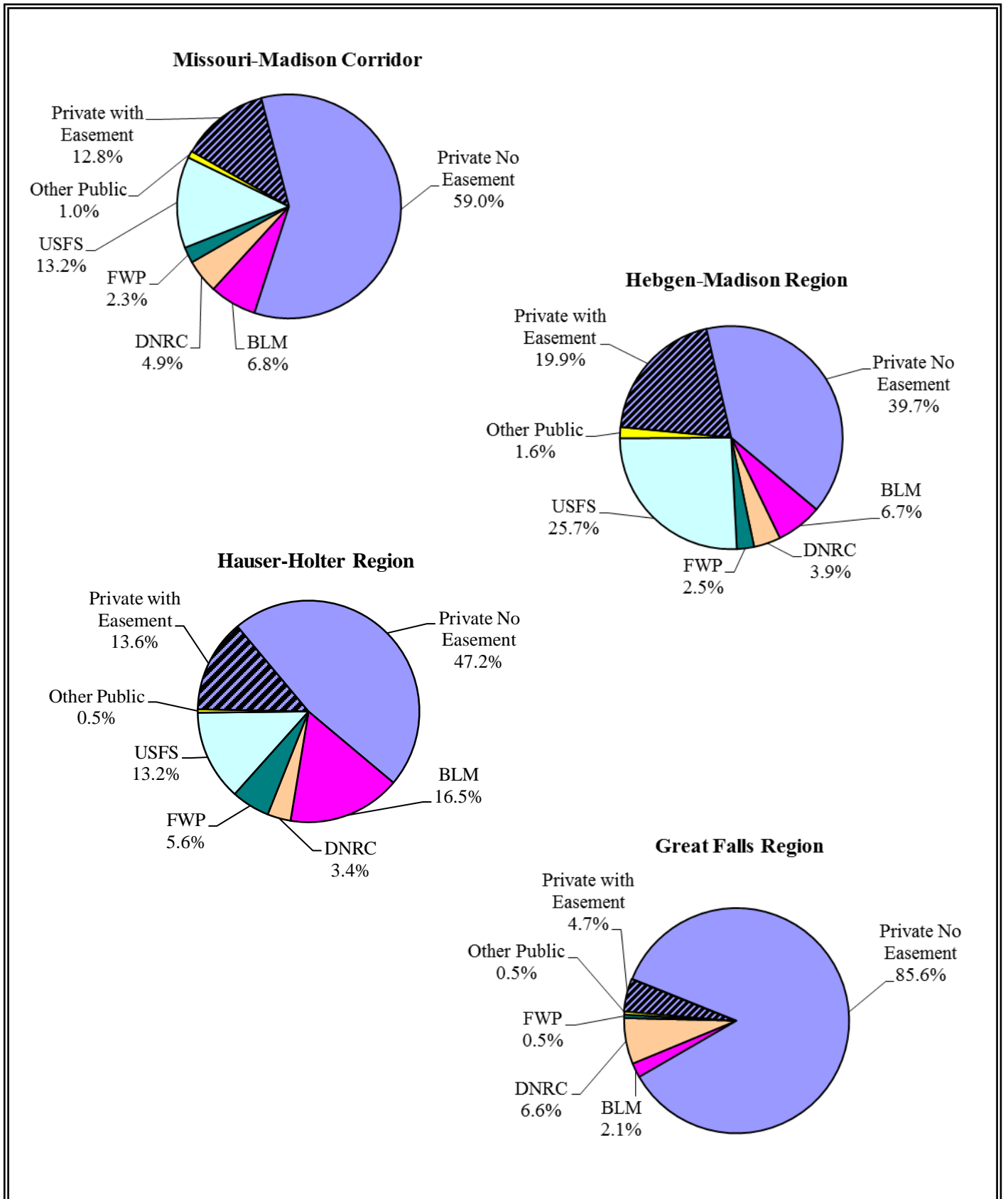
A minimum of 60 percent and as much as 90 percent of land in each region is privately owned, indicating a need for good private-public partnerships to conserve access and recreation resources related to public waterways. This need is further reflected in the Issue Statements and Goals set forth in this Plan (Chapter 2-1) which specifically addresses changes in land use as a result of development pressure.

Conservation easements have been established on 12.8 percent of the privately owned property throughout the Corridor, an increase of 2.8 percent compared to 2010. The amount of land in easement for each region varies from 4.7 percent in the Great Falls Region, to 13.6 percent in the Hauser-Holter Region, and 19.9 percent in the Hebgen-Madison Region.



Metal platforms provide access to the kids fishing pond near Giant Springs State Park in Great Falls.

Figure 3-3.1: Land Ownership and Management Jurisdiction



Plans and Strategies for Recreation Management

Responsibility to manage public recreation resources in the Project Area lies specifically with the agencies and governmental entities granted jurisdiction over public lands and land uses, including the USFS, BLM, and FWP, as well as each of the counties, towns, and municipalities and Northwestern Energy.. The numerous existing federal, state, and local management and land use plans effective in the Corridor were reviewed to provide a context for this Plan. Since each management plan focuses on the resources and lands under the jurisdiction of the agency implementing the plan, some differences exist in how recreation management is prescribed. However, there is a common goal across agencies and land managers to preserve natural resources to the extent possible while also providing recreation opportunities and enhancing surrounding communities. This planning framework will help integrate the agencies' strengths into a comprehensive approach to providing recreation to the public in the Project Area, with the intent of providing better recreation services to the public over the long-term, with less impact, and at a more affordable cost.

This section provides a summary by region of the management direction for each listed entity as it relates to recreation. The various plans and strategies are presented first for statewide initiatives and then by region as follows:

Statewide Initiatives

- Montana 2014-2018 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Summary
- Montana State Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2015-2020
- Montana River Recreation, FWP
- Commercial Use Rules, FWP
- Montana State Trails Plan, FWP
- Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Management of Fishing Access Sites
- Strategic Plan 2013-2017, Montana Department of Commerce Promotions Division

Hebgen-Madison Region

- Custer-Gallatin National Forest Plan
- Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Plan
- Dillon Resource Management Plan, BLM Dillon Field Office
- Lower Madison Recreation Area Management Plan, BLM Dillon Field Office
- Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness Plan, BLM Dillon Field Office
- Gallatin County Growth Policy
- Hebgen Lake Zoning Regulations
- Madison County Growth Policy and Madison Valley Plan
- Town of Ennis Planning and Land Use Regulations

Hauser-Holter Region

- Helena National Forest Plan
- Butte Resource Management Plan, BLM Butte Field Office
- Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust
- Broadwater County Growth Policy
- Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy
- Canyon Ferry Reservoir Shoreline Management Plan, BOR

Great Falls Region

- Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Interpretive Center
- Headwaters, West HiLine and Judith, Valley, Phillips Resource Management Plans, and Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, BLM Central Montana District Office
- Giant Springs State Park Management Plan, FWP
- Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan (for Great Falls)
- Chouteau County Growth Policy

The Plan has supported the goals of many of these plans directly through recreation projects in the Project Area. Specifically, urban and backcountry trails and trailheads have been developed and maintained, in keeping with the SCORP, Montana State Trails Plan, and various Forest Plans. The Plan has supported the concept of multiple use, which is at the center of Forest Plans and BLM Resource Management Plans, by supporting projects for various daytime and overnight facilities. The Plan addresses issues related to waterway access for fishing and water-based recreation, which are also identified in the SCORP, FWPs Fishing Access Site Management Plan, and the Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan. Universal accessibility issues identified in the SCORP are also addressed in the Plan, and many projects developed in the Project Area since 1996 brought sites into ADA-compliance or developed new areas that provide universal accessibility.

Statewide Initiatives

- Montana 2014-2018 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Summary

The Montana Outdoor Recreation Plan, also known as the 2014-2018 Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), is the state's comprehensive plan for outdoor recreation and conservation management and planning. The document, titled, *Creating a Vibrant Future For Montana's Outdoor Recreation Heritage*, helps all levels of public land managers and private recreation providers meet needs pertaining to outdoor recreation. It is consistent with the principles of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 (expired in 2015). The 2014-2018 plan represents a collaborative effort between Montana's diverse recreation providers, the tourism community, and residents; and provides a strategy to guide management of Montana's outdoor recreation resources in a holistic and effective manner.

The purpose of the plan is to outline Montana's five-year strategy and vision for outdoor recreation management. The plan:

- Identifies major outdoor recreation trends, needs, and issues of statewide importance, both at the state and regional level;
- Evaluates the supply and demand of recreation facilities and resources;
- Provides guidance to direct Montana's stateside apportionment of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program;
- Provides strategies, priorities, and actions for implementation to enhance recreation over the next five years.

Montana State Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2015-2020

Montana State Parks, a Division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, released an updated strategic plan in 2015. *Charting a New Tomorrow* is an innovative and business-minded management approach that will maximize the Division's available resources, develop partnerships and build public engagement to create a bright future for outdoor recreation across Montana. The plan addresses budgetary and staffing shortfalls which have historically challenged the park system while focusing on strategic partnerships and engaged constituents. Under the guidance of the Montana State Parks & Recreation Board, the Division

outlines a new strategic framework and brand promise to enhance visitor expectations and set the stage for reinvestment in the park system. Major outcomes include classifying and prioritizing the most significant sites, increasing sustainable funding, expanding strategic partnerships, and heighten awareness and recognition for the Montana State Parks brand. Five major goals and accompanying targets have been developed:

- A. Resources and Approaches: Manage significant, relevant, and accessible parks and programs in a manner that is consistent with available resources.
- B. Fiscal Sustainability: Develop diversified and sustainable funding for Montana State Parks and statewide recreation programs.
- C. Services and Experiences: Enrich the visitor experience for all consistent with the brand promise.
- D. Partnerships and Engagement: Foster strategic partnerships and an engaged constituency with visitors and key stakeholders that have a shared interest in the success of the Montana State Park system.
- E. Awareness and Outreach: Heighten awareness and recognition for the Montana State Parks brand through consistent engagement.

Implementation of the strategic plan is underway and will continue to be a primary focus for Montana State Parks. The first stage involves conducting a facility condition assessment and establishing operational and staffing standards based on peer analysis with surrounding state park systems. Once the analysis is complete, the Division will begin the process of reallocating resources to the most significant sites in order to meet standards and improve visitor experiences at those parks. *Charting a New Tomorrow* is the result of a year long process that included contributions from the Parks Division, legislative members, agency partners, user groups and other stakeholders through surveys, community listening sessions, and public review.

Montana River Recreation

A trend over many years identifies river recreation as a highly valued resource by Montana residents and visitors. Even with the wide array of river recreation opportunities available in Montana, the amount of use in some places has increased to the point that people are concerned about crowding, conflicts, and other social issues. In response to this concern, FWP adopted statewide river recreation rules in 2004. The rules include an analysis and decision-making process for the development of river recreation management plans and rules. The rules also provide direction on complex social issues such as river outfitting, resident and nonresident use, and rationing and allocation systems. FWP has used the statewide river recreation rule to guide the development of a management plan for the Blackfoot River and to update the Smith River State Park management plan. The statewide river recreation rules have also provided guidance for reviewing the Beaverhead and Big Hole river recreation rules and an ongoing effort to develop a recreation management plan for the Madison River.

FWP Commercial Use Rules

The FWP Commercial Use Rules adopted in 2006 apply to all commercial activities that occur on lands under the control, administration, and jurisdiction of the department. The rules provide direction on approving and administering commercial use, permit requirements, and permit fees.

Montana State Trails Plan

The Montana State Trails Plan was developed to examine Montana's trail system from an inter-agency, statewide perspective in order to most effectively use limited trail resources, avoid duplication of efforts, and establish and focus on high priority needs. The Plan will help provide direction to trail managers about where they should devote scarce resources to better serve trail users by identifying who the users are, what they are doing, what they prefer, and where they are going.

An important goal of this Plan is to improve trail-related communication in Montana. More contact between user groups and managing agencies will result in managers receiving more and better information about trail conditions, needs, and conflicts, while users will learn more about the challenges facing trail managers. The Plan is meant to provide trail managers with information about the trail system and the people who use them, and to produce general, statewide recommendations on trail issues and needs. The primary focus of the Plan is on trails owned and managed by the federal, state, or local levels of government.

Fishing Access Sites

FWP currently manages 35 Fishing Access Sites (FASs) on the Madison and Missouri rivers between Hebgen Reservoir and Fort Benton. Three are on reservoirs and the remaining are located within the river reaches. The FASs have proven to be an integral part of angling and floater access to the Madison and Missouri Rivers. Angler surveys indicate that these river systems receive tens of thousands angler days each year, not including other water based recreation activities that have seen a dramatic increase over the years. This makes the FASs on river reaches among the most heavily visited sites in the entire state.

New FASs are acquired and developed as opportunities arise and funding is available. FAS acquisitions are typically purchased with earmarked money generated from the sale of fishing licenses. Other sources of potential funding include Natural Resource Damage Program, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Trust and federal Wallop-Breaux grants. Additional donations by Land Trusts, fish and wildlife conservation organizations and other institutions have contributed either all or part of the costs for six of the last seven acquisitions from 2012 – 2014. In recent years FWP’s funding for new fishing access acquisitions has diminished as the cost to maintain existing FAS’s has increased. The Department was forced to shift the majority of earmarked license funding from the acquisition program to operations and maintenance.

The general criteria for evaluating potential acquisitions include:

1. Areas adjacent to high quality rivers, lakes and streams
2. Permanent public access
3. Located within a four hour float of other public sites up and down stream
4. Suitability in size and topography for development of infrastructure that typically includes an access road, a parking area, vault latrine and boat ramp
5. Stream bank stability
6. Proximity of existing neighbors (Conflicts among FAS users and neighbors are more prevalent when home sites are within view of the FAS. A “buffer” of several vegetated acres between the FAS and adjacent private property is preferred.)

By legislative statute provided in MCA 23-1-126, the Good Neighbor Policy, FWP is mandated to minimize impacts to adjoining landowners and is required to place maintenance of its properties as a priority. Consequently, it is incumbent on FWP to not only maintain each of the sites in the statewide Fishing Access Site program in a safe, clean, and presentable fashion for use by the general public but to also maintain weed control, fencing, signage, enforce rules and regulations, etc. in a manner that minimizes impacts to neighboring landowners. Acquisition of new sites will continually be weighed against the cost of maintenance and caretaker services until a permanent solution can be found to adequately fund maintenance operations.

Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2013-2017

The Montana Department of Commerce Promotions Division developed the *Montana Tourism & Recreation Strategic Plan 2013-2017*. The Plan guides industry leaders in tourism and recreation planning and program development through the year 2017 and beyond. The goals of the plan include enhancing awareness and support for tourism, distributing benefits of tourism to all regions in all seasons, managing and protecting assets through sustainable use, maintaining infrastructure and business support

services, identifying and evaluating markets, and building effective teams and partnerships to realize the vision for 2017. One priority objective of the plan is to manage assets, which refers to the natural, historical and cultural attributes, places or events in Montana, in ways that will protect the natural and man-made amenities and reduce negative impacts associated with their use. This includes seeking a balance between asset protection and visitor/business needs, addressing access issues on public and private lands and waters, developing an enhanced transportation system in Montana (including highways, secondary roadways, rest areas, and trails), creating a comprehensive and interactive system of visitor information and interpretation, improving the statewide system of highway signs, and assisting communities in enhancement of tourism facilities and services.

Hebgen-Madison Region

Custer-Gallatin National Forest

The Hebgen area lies within the Gallatin National Forest, which is managed under the Gallatin National Forest Plan. The plan concentrates on managing for multiple uses of resources including recreation, wildlife protection and propagation, timber harvesting, and mining. The Forest Plan objectives provide for more emphasis on maintenance of developed recreation sites and allow for new facilities when there is an increasing public need. The objectives further state, “River segments identified as eligible for potential classification and inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system will be managed to protect their ‘outstandingly remarkable’ values until a future decision is made on possible wild and scenic designation.” Within the Missouri-Madison Corridor, the Madison River from the National Forest boundary near the Madison Slide to the Hebgen Dam meets the eligibility criteria for potential classification. The Forest-wide standards delineate limits on this particular river segment - within one-fourth mile of each stream bank - for timber harvest, existing dams and minor structures, new structures, flood control facilities, mineral activity, parallel and access roads, campgrounds, utility lines, and motorized travel.

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest is also found within the Project Area on the upper Madison River and it is administered by the Madison Ranger District. The revised Forest Plan (2009) focuses on the need to establish a mix of recreation settings that best meet public expectations. The forest’s goal is to provide high-quality, diverse outdoor recreation opportunities for forest visitors. The Forest Plan recognizes the social and economic importance of recreation to local communities. The Forest Service allows permitted outfitting and guiding and resort operations on its lands to enhance visitor enjoyment and contribute to regional and local economies.

Dillon Resource Management Plan

The Dillon Field Office of the BLM manages public lands in the Project Area from the Forest boundary below Quake Lake to the Madison-Gallatin County line at Black’s Ford FAS. The Dillon Resource Management Plan (RMP), completed in 2006, is the base land use plan for the public lands administered by the Dillon Field Office. All resource authorizations and actions must conform to, or be consistent with the RMP, which establishes goals and provides direction for recreational uses including national trails, developed recreation, visual resources, travel management and OHV use. The RMP also identifies the recreational emphasis for two Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) that encompass all of the BLM lands located in the Project Area.

Lower Madison Recreation Area Management Plan

The Lower Madison Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP), completed in 2001, provides specific management direction for recreational activities and developments within the lower Madison River corridor from the northern boundary of the Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness to the Madison/Gallatin county line. The primary goal of the RAMP is to maintain the scenic character of the lower Madison River,

protect natural and cultural resources, and offer a variety of recreational opportunities. This includes developing facilities and allowing recreational activities that do not compromise the values of the river and adjacent wilderness.

Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness Plan

The Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness Plan, completed in 1984, provides broad management direction for the Wilderness. Recreation management emphasizes opportunities for primitive recreation featuring a natural wilderness environment, solitude, physical and mental challenge, and inspiration consistent with preservation of wilderness values.

City and County Growth Policies and Plans

The Hebgen-Madison Region is located in parts of Gallatin and Madison counties, and there are a number of growth and zoning policies in place that affect development in the Project Area.

Gallatin County has consistently been ranked amongst the fastest growing counties in Montana over the past decades. This high rate of growth has contributed to the outward expansion of development, away from historical population centers. Growth is expected to continue in Gallatin County, but how and where growth occurs is a critical component to maintaining the characteristics that make Gallatin County such a wonderful place to live and work. In the Gallatin County Growth Policy the County has established goals and policies to help ensure that growth occurs in a coordinated, logical, and cost-effective manner that minimizes unplanned, costly sprawl.

There are currently 22 separate zoning districts in Gallatin County (outside the jurisdictional boundaries of Belgrade, Bozeman, Manhattan, Three Forks, and West Yellowstone) that have adopted individual plans for guiding growth. One such district is the Hebgen Lake Zoning District, where regulations have been adopted to promote public health, safety, and welfare by implementing development patterns for the District. The main goals of the plan are to preserve scenic and natural resources, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, prevent the spread of noxious weeds, allow for tourism and recreational uses while also preventing over-crowding, encourage open space, minimize impacts on neighboring property owners, and conserve property values. Regulations were developed related to shoreline setbacks, minimum lot size requirements, development standards and building regulations, and incentives for open space.

While Bozeman lies outside of the Project Area, population growth in and around the city influences recreational use of the corridor. Access to the Madison River – the lower river segment in particular – is easily obtained by Bozeman residents, including students at Montana State University. High levels of use are recorded on the lower Madison segment by recreational floaters, which can impact other user types (such as fishermen) that also enjoy the river. Even though the conflict between these user groups is currently minimal, managers are aware of the potential for that conflict to become a bigger problem in the future.

The Madison County Growth Policy 2012 and Madison Valley Growth Management Plan apply directly to areas of the Madison River Project Area. The Plan calls for protection of the entire river Project Area from encroachment by development, specifically in terms of preserving the scenic, fish and wildlife, recreational, agricultural, historic, archaeological, and floodplain values of the Project Area. New subdivisions must be located in areas which will not adversely impact present or future recreational amenities, including the Madison River Project Area, Ennis Lake, National Forest and other public lands. Developments that works to preserve and protect wildlife resources and promote recreation and tourism are encouraged.

Development in Madison County is also regulated by sanitation rules, a floodplain management ordinance and subdivision regulations which include a 500-foot building setback requirement from the Madison

River in all subdivisions. In 2005, Madison County adopted a set of community design guidelines to educate and inform people about home site and commercial development decisions that are sensitive to neighbors and the landscape. These guidelines, known as “The Code of the New West,” focus on the issues of ridge top development, dark skies protection, architectural compatibility, commercial signage/billboards, and fire protection. A recent addition to the Code are streamside protection guidelines.

The town of Ennis has also developed planning and land use regulations that are in effect in the Madison River Project Area. Goals and objectives of the plan include developing park and recreational facilities that meet the needs of all citizens, a park and open space system along the Madison River linked with other community recreation spaces, making effective use of natural resources while protecting environmental quality, and protecting the Madison Valley’s natural character. The plan also commits to actively participating in area fisheries management. Development policies emphasize stopping suburban sprawl, protecting the natural environment (including wetlands and flood-prone areas), retaining a “small town” character, protecting agricultural lands, and promoting basic sector jobs.

Hauser-Holter Region

Helena National Forest

The Helena National Forest administers lands in the Hauser-Holter Region. The Helena National Forest Plan (1986) identifies management goals and standards for all USFS lands, including those within the Project Area. Approximately 50 percent of Forest Service lands located adjacent to the Missouri River in the Region are managed to maintain and improve range vegetative conditions and forage production for livestock and elk. In addition, non-motorized dispersed recreation is supported by trails and trailhead facilities when compatible with area goals.

Helena National Forest lands lie on the east side of the river in the lower Hauser and Upper Holter areas. In some areas, trails and other dispersed forms of recreation are supported. Helena Forest lands located adjacent to Upper Holter Lake and the Missouri River are managed to provide a variety of semi-primitive and primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities. Part of the area is managed to protect wilderness characteristics, pending Congressional classification. In those areas, visitor use may be restricted to prevent the loss of solitude. Recreation facilities are only permitted to preserve or enhance dispersed recreation opportunities and motorized vehicles are not allowed.

The Helena Forest Plan identified the Missouri River as a Sensitive Viewing Area that should be managed with the Visual Quality Objective of Retention. A revised scenery management system for the U.S. Forest Service indicates the Missouri River should be managed for Very High (Unaltered) Scenic Integrity.

Butte Resource Management Plan

The Butte Field Office of the BLM manages four Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) and 22 developed recreation sites within the Missouri River corridor between Three Forks, Montana and Holter Dam. This area has been and continues to be a high priority for future land acquisitions due to its high resource values, recreation use, sub-division and development potential, the presence of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the associated importance of maintaining scenic and natural landscapes.

Amenity fees are collected at seven of the highly developed sites managed by the BLM in order to offset management costs. In addition, there are about 60 undeveloped BLM sites within this river corridor. Many of these sites are boat-in campsites located along the shorelines of Hauser and Holter Lakes. The Butte Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved in April 2009, provides the overall management strategy for all BLM lands in the region by major program responsibility.

Special designation areas within the Project Area include the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Sleeping Giant Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), and the Sheep Creek and Sleeping Giant Wilderness Study Areas (both are recommended for wilderness designation). Management guidance for these special areas is provided in the Final Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek Wilderness Study/EIS of January 1991. In addition, a 3.1-mile segment of the Missouri River between Hauser Dam and Upper Holter Lake has been identified as preliminarily suitable for designation as a Wild and Scenic River. A final suitability recommendation is pending a study determination by the USFS of its adjoining lands on the opposite side of this river segment. The management objective is to protect the important values and characteristics of these areas to the extent possible from impairment actions.

Specific direction in the RMP is provided for recreation, special designation areas, motorized vehicle travel, special use permits, Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Visual Resource Management (VRM). The overall recreation management goals are to: provide a diverse array of recreation opportunities; establish, manage and maintain quality recreation sites and facilities, manage commercial, competitive or special events through appropriate permit authorizations; manage recreation opportunities to provide local economic benefits and protect resource values; provide a balanced approach to travel management; manage visual resources in accordance with VRM class objectives; and manage special management areas to promote quality experiences and protect area values.

Primary recreation management objectives and/or actions for public lands within the corridor are:

- Manage ROS and VRM classes for desired settings, appropriate uses and recreational experience levels. The VRM classes for these public lands range from Class 1 (highest quality protection) to Class 4 (lowest quality protection). The ROS categories on BLM lands within the Project Area is equally diverse in that these lands range from Primitive to Rural development settings.
- SRMAs will be managed to meet the needs of the primary tourism markets, desired settings and primary recreation opportunities.
- Provide a diverse range of quality recreation opportunities and experiences in accordance with public demands, resource conditions and capabilities.
- Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly practices will be promoted.
- Support events that emphasize collaborative outreach and public land awareness.
- Utilize and support volunteer participation.
- Continue to participate in partnership efforts that are mutually beneficial to all parties to enhance comprehensive planning, collaborative management and collective funding. Priority efforts include the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan and Memorandum of Understanding with NorthWestern and other established partners, challenge cost-share arrangements, relationships with tourism organizations and interest groups, as well as local, state, and other federal governments, existing agreements with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to collectively manage recreation sites such as White Sandy and Black Sandy and foster additional partnerships where common interests exist, and pursue opportunities to expand day-use capabilities on Holter Lake as identified in the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan and Hydroelectric Project No. 2188.
- Continue to issue special recreation use permits where appropriate for non-motorized commercial, competitive and special events. Commercial camping permits within developed fee sites will not be authorized from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekends.
- Established recreation sites and facilities will be operated and maintained to promote resource value protection, public safety and health, quality facilities, management efficiency and visitor experiences.

- Utilize comparable, cost-effective and value-based fee systems at highly developed sites to offset costs.
- Priority funding and management efforts will be given to developed sites that receive the highest visitation.
- New sites will be developed commensurate with public demands, setting conditions, resource constraints and management capability. Priority will be given where partnership funding strategies exist.
- Boat-in camping at dispersed sites (excluding Beartooth Landing) on BLM lands along the east shoreline of Holter Lake will be limited to designated sites only. Site availability will be determined through field evaluations by an interdisciplinary team. Suitable sites where impacts to other important resources (wildlife, cultural resources, riparian vegetation, etc.) are acceptable will be designated, signed and available to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. A similar management system will be undertaken for dispersed sites on BLM lands along Hauser Lake should resource concerns and conditions warrant.
- Visitor surveys, public comments, condition assessments and site evaluations will be periodically conducted to guide the future management of sites. Available funds will be prioritized to resolve deferred and corrective maintenance needs to promote public safety, accessibility and experience satisfaction.
- Motorized vehicle travel on public lands within the project area managed by the Butte Field Office is limited to designated routes. The Sleeping Giant ACEC and WSAs are closed yearlong to motorized travel.

Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust

In 1998, U.S. Congress established the Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust to provide a permanent source of funding for the acquisition of publicly accessible land in Montana. The intent of the Trust is to restore and conserve fisheries, riparian, and wildlife habitat and to enhance public hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities while improving access to public lands. The Trust is funded by proceeds from the sale of federally leased cabin sites on Canyon Ferry Reservoir, which is managed by the Bureau of Reclamation.

City and County Growth Policies and Plans

The Hauser-Holter Region is located in parts of Gallatin, Broadwater, and Lewis and Clark counties. A number of growth policies of these counties affect development in the Project Area.

Extensive acreage of irrigated crop land, timber, and agricultural resources, as well as assets for a strong recreation industry including the Missouri River and Canyon Ferry Reservoir, are part of Broadwater County, as are the outstanding fisheries and abundant wildlife supported by the county's lakes, rivers and streams. Most subdivision developments in Broadwater County have occurred on marginal agricultural lands, minimizing impacts to existing irrigated and productive lands. Under the Broadwater County Growth Policy, future development will be encouraged in areas such as these, especially near existing communities. A set-back distance of 100 feet from streams and lakes was adopted for wells and septic drainfields, and policy directs that new developments establish a weed management plan in coordination with the county weed board. The County is committed to providing adequate recreation facilities to serve all segments of the population while protecting natural resources and rights of individuals.

Much of the growth in Lewis and Clark County is occurring in unincorporated areas within the Helena Valley, a portion of which borders Hauser Reservoir. The fastest pace of population growth in the Project Area is occurring here and in the Bozeman area (adjacent to the project area). In the 1990s, agricultural

operations in the county were relatively small in nature and the amount of land utilized for agriculture decreased as a result of residential development. One goal of the Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy is to maintain the opportunity for a rural lifestyle and to support farming and ranching operations. In order to provide more predictability for property owners and the development community, the Policy works to direct growth by informing developers about areas that are most and least suitable for development and guiding growth to urban and suburban lands, and nonproductive lands. Additionally, countywide development standards, planning area zoning, and/or neighborhood zoning to address general land use concerns.

To address issues related to protection of the natural environment in Lewis and Clark County, development will be encouraged in areas with few environmental hazards or development constraints to minimize degradation. Hazardous areas and flood-prone lands will be preserved as open space wherever possible by discouraging development in 100-year floodplains. Development setback requirements for subdivisions have been developed along streams, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs to preserve water quality and other natural resources, viewsheds, and recreational uses. The county's critical wildlife habitat, wetlands, and open space will continue to be preserved, as well as the natural wetland buffers along the county's rivers, lakes, and streams. The Missouri River Project Area is identified in the Growth Policy as an area of unique character and quality that will be preserved, improved and protected through coordinated efforts with local watershed groups, conservation districts, private landowners, and other entities.

Bureau of Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Resource Management Plan

Canyon Ferry Reservoir is managed by the Bureau of Reclamation's Montana Area Office and lies adjacent to the Project Area directly upstream of Hauser Reservoir. The 33,500 surface acres of water and 96 miles of shoreline embodied by the reservoir offer fishing opportunities for rainbow trout, perch, ling, and walleye. The 23 developed recreation sites along the shoreline include boat ramps, campgrounds, day-use areas, shelters, swim areas, and marinas.

In June 2012, the Bureau of Reclamation adopted the Canyon Ferry Reservoir Shoreline Management Plan. The plan is intended to provide balanced, practical, and relevant guidance for addressing public use, adjacent landowner concerns, and resource protection on the shoreline of Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Many of the elements contained in the Shoreline Plan were outlined as actions in the preferred alternative of the 2003 Resource Management Plan/Environmental Assessment. The plan addresses access for the recreating public as well as private cabin owners, guidelines for dock systems, shoreline protection and erosion control, and use permits.

Great Falls Region

US Forest Service

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center opened in May, 1998, under the management of the U.S. Forest Service. The Center, positioned on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River, is 1.5 miles downstream from Black Eagle Dam. The Center serves as an interpretive link connecting today's visitors with the 1804-06 Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Interpretive Center hosts approximately 48,000 visitors each year, including approximately 4,000 students. Interpretive staff provides a full array of indoor and outdoor programming, including interpretive talks, temporary displays, demonstrations, video productions, nature walks, and an outdoor activity area along the banks of the Missouri where demonstrations of 1800-era life skills take place throughout the summer. Since 2000, the Center has offered evening interpretive and educational programs. Four pedestrian-only trails connect to trails in Giant Springs State Park and the River's Edge Trail.

In addition to operating the Interpretive Center, the agency also constructed and maintains the Sulphur Spring Trail, a 1.8-mile pedestrian hiking path located along the bluffs on the north shore of the Missouri River, providing access to the historic Sulphur Spring, part of the Great Falls Portage National Historic Landmark. The trail, which runs between the spring and Morony Townsite, includes interpretive signage to educate visitors about the landscape along the river as well as the history associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Sulphur Spring Trail allows hikers to travel the North Shore Trail from the Rainbow Dam trailhead to Morony Townsite and on to Sulphur Spring.

BLM – Central Montana District Office

The Central Montana District Office of the Bureau of Land Management is responsible for overseeing resources on BLM lands in the Great Falls Region of the Corridor, as well as the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (2001) and Upper Missouri River National Wild and Scenic River (1976), both of which are downstream from Fort Benton. These lands are managed under four different BLM land use plans – Headwaters RMP 1983, West HiLine RMP 1988, Judith, Valley, Phillips RMP 1992, and the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan.

The RMPs discuss maintaining the visual quality of public lands along the river systems and managing the Lewis and Clark and the Nez Perce National Historic Trails consistent with the provisions of the National Trails Act (PL 90-543 and PL 95-265) and the comprehensive plan prepared by the National Park Service in 1982. The BLM also proposes to continue to enhance public access to the river and to consider the acquisition of lands to enhance recreational opportunities.

The RMPs also provide for two Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA's) that border each side of the river. The recreation objectives identified in the SRMAs provide for undeveloped and developed river recreational opportunities, and, most importantly, encourage and support recreation initiatives through partnerships and cost sharing. The Widow Coulee Fishing Access Site below the mouth of Belt Creek and the Sulphur Springs Trail near Morony Dam are examples of cooperative efforts.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Giant Springs State Park Management Plan

The Giant Springs State Park Management Plan addresses management of lands located along the Missouri River at Great Falls. The Park occupies a total of 3,238 acres of land owned or managed by the State Park system on both the north and south shores. The Park system includes the 2,415-acre Lewis and Clark Heritage Greenway Conservation Easement and 430 acres of fee title land. Primitive dirt trails generally extend from Rainbow Dam to Sulfur Spring (below Morony Dam) along 14 miles of the north shoreline of the Missouri River, as well as portions of the paved River's Edge Trail and some more primitive dirt trails along the south shoreline. Giant Springs State Park and the surrounding river Project Area are managed to conserve the park's unique cultural and natural resources while maintaining a desired open space character, providing a high quality educational experience for park visitors focused on the Park's natural and cultural resources, and providing a wide range of quality recreational experiences. The area and river Project Area surrounding the park is managed cooperatively by FWP for Giant Springs State Park, USFS for the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center and the Sulfur Springs Trail, Northwestern Energy, City of Great Falls, and the BLM. Participation by other landowners in this area is strictly on a voluntary basis.

City and County Growth Policies and Plans

The City of Great Falls has an adopted plan intended to guide development of lands adjoining the Missouri River in Great Falls, titled "Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan." This plan provides direction for growth and change of lands from approximately White Bear Island to Black Eagle Island in Great Falls. Although industrial parks and recreational uses have traditionally been the dominant uses, the plan

encourages a more thoughtful mix of uses to provide a more vital, active riverfront that accommodates both private and public lands in a harmonious, complimentary mixture of uses. The plan sets forth a series of strategies and actions to work toward realizing the vision of a more desirable, sustainable development that would capitalize on the river as an amenity and a resource. Despite an extensive park and trail system, there are few shoreline areas within the city that provide opportunities for people to interact with and experience the water, so improving shoreline conditions and enhancing public access to the water is intended to be a major consideration as the study areas are revitalized. Guiding principles of the plan support development that ensures safe flows at flood stages, enhances land and water based recreational values and opportunities associated with the river, and protects ecological elements such as water quality, natural shoreline vegetation, and wetlands. Finally, the plan includes and incorporates a study titled "Missouri River Urban Corridor Inventory & Assessment," which rates stream bank conditions and recommends treatments for restoration. This assessment also suggests recreation improvements along the riverfront.

A final related plan is the "West Bank Urban Renewal Plan," adopted in 2007 by the City of Great Falls. This plan is intended to facilitate and guide redevelopment of a blighted, transitioning industrial area adjoining the west bank of the Missouri River, extending from approximately the railroad bridge near the BNSF Railway shops downriver to approximately the Northwest Bypass.

Future plans for the Park and Recreation Department include the development of a comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan that will assist the department in making statistically valid, data driven decisions based on community needs as opposed to individual special interest groups. Aligning programs and services to actual community needs will set the stage for future park and recreation development opportunities. The plan will also look to find creative ways to connect the river's edge trail system to park and recreation opportunities spread throughout various locations in the city. This includes the development of safe walking and biking routes to help promote active and healthy lifestyles for the residents of Great Falls.

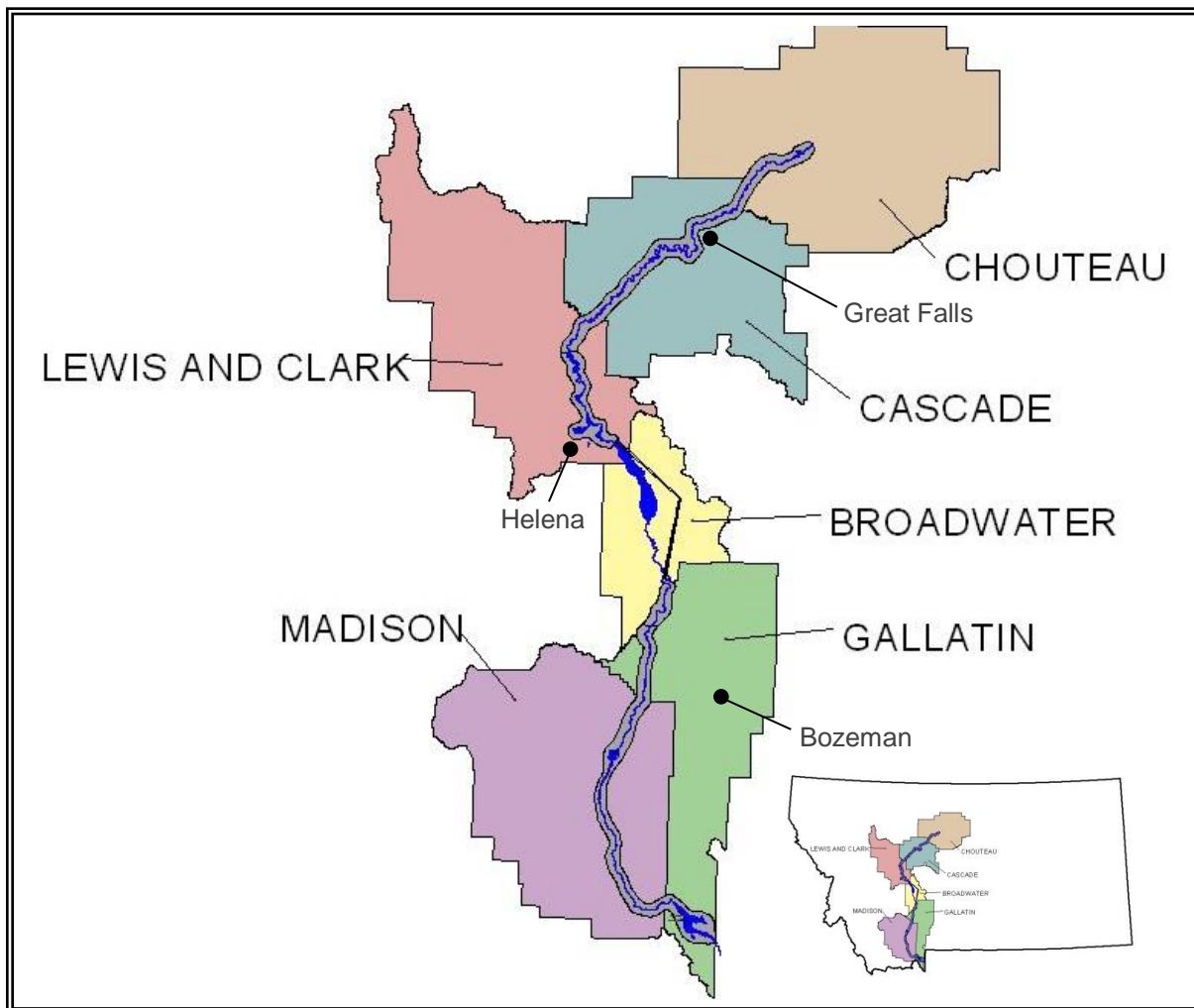
Like many counties in Montana, Chouteau County is experiencing a land-use transition in areas throughout the county. This is evidenced by a steady shift from traditional use as farm and ranch land to new residential development and minor subdivisions. Zoning, development guidelines, subdivision guidelines and shoreline setback regulations have been examined for their advantages and effectiveness to assist county planners in ensuring that future development occurs in a sensible and sustainable fashion. The Chouteau county planner and Chouteau County Planning Board are working to keep their growth policy updated continually, by constant review, as that addresses old and new issues of community livability, personal property right protection, preservation of the rural lifestyle, and resource protection.

Chapter 3-4: Population and Development Trends

Montana residents that live within or adjacent to the Project Area influence land development and recreational use of the Project Area. Montana's population has grown 24 percent since 1990, an increase of nearly 200,000 people and a growth rate that has paralleled the national rate.

The six counties that encompass the Project Area – Gallatin, Madison, Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, Chouteau, and Cascade (Figure 3-4.1) are a mixture of urban-based and rural areas. Great Falls, Helena and Bozeman are the cities of Cascade, Lewis and Clark and Gallatin. Of these, Gallatin and Lewis and Clark account for almost all of the population growth in the last two census periods. The Great Falls region experienced the slowest growth in population between 1990 and 2010, while the Hebgen-Madison (Bozeman) and Hauser-Holter (Helena) regions experienced growth of 72 and 36 percent respectively.

Figure 3-4.1: Six Montana Counties of the Missouri-Madison Corridor



**Table 3-4.1: Resident Population of
the United States, Montana, and Selected Counties, 1990 - 2010**

	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change		
				1990-2000	2000-2010	1990-2010
United States	249,663,000	281,422,000	308,745,538	13%	10%	24%
Montana	799,005	905,195	989,415	13%	9%	24%
Hebgen-Madison Region Counties	56,452	74,682	97,204	32%	30%	72%
Gallatin County	50,463	67,831	89,513	34%	32%	77%
Madison County	5,989	6,851	7,691	14%	12%	28%
Hauser-Holter Region Counties	50,813	60,101	69,007	18%	15%	36%
Lewis & Clark County	47,495	55,716	63,395	17%	14%	33%
Broadwater County	3,318	4,385	5,612	32%	28%	69%
Great Falls Region Counties	83,143	86,327	87,140	4%	1%	5%
Chouteau County	5,452	5,970	5,813	10%	-3%	7%
Cascade County	77,691	80,357	81,327	3%	1%	5%
Total Project Area Counties	190,408	221,110	253,351	16%	15%	33%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov.

Land Use and Development

The majority of land in the Corridor is in private ownership, though under Montana Stream Access law, the river itself is open to public access. Of the approximately 773,000 acres in the Corridor, 72 percent (approx. 556,560 acres) is privately owned and 28 percent (approx. 216,440 acres) is public. Therefore, the context for public recreation use is influenced largely by private landowners, though public agencies have offset this influence by strategic access acquisitions. Private lands in the Corridor are experiencing development pressures, with both year-round and vacation homes being constructed on reservoir and river shorelines. This trend is expected to continue as private lands continue to be subdivided, creating a shift from an agriculture-based land use to one of a more residential character. Subdivision and development within the Corridor are most prevalent in the Ennis area, Helena Valley area and southwest of Great Falls.

Along with a progression in recent years toward subdivision and development, the social awareness of important open space lands has also increased. While the number of properties large enough to support traditional farming and ranching— typically those 640 acres in size or more – are diminishing in the corridor, the amount of private land protected by conservation easement has increased by about 3 percent over the past 5 years, especially in the Hauser-Holter Region. Existence of open space areas support positive visitor

experiences in corridor, as evidenced through opinions projected in visitor surveys. Between 2008 and 2014, the percentage of visitors that indicated they disliked shoreline development dropped by 50 percent (from 14% to 7%). This change in visitor perceptions coincides with a period of slow development between 2008 and 2014 as a result of economic conditions, which resulted in few changes to shoreline development during that time period. While shoreline development may become more commonplace and expected during recreation outings, the importance of open space areas – however dispersed – help to offset opinions of dissatisfaction related to shoreline development.

The table and charts that follow illustrate population and ownership distribution throughout the Corridor. Table 3-4.3 displays, for each region and the Corridor, the number of private properties distributed by size, the distribution of private property sizes by acreage, and the total number of structures present in each region. The bar graphs (Figures 3-4.2 and 3-4.3) illustrate this distribution of private properties by size class for number of properties and for number of acres across the three regions and Corridor. The maps that follow (Figures 3-4.4 and 3-4.5) display current residential properties and structure locations in the Corridor. Refer to Appendix A4 for regional maps showing structure locations. It is important to note that these tables, graphs and maps cannot be directly compared with those shown in previous versions of the Plan. For a variety of reasons (e.g. completeness of the raw data) a direct comparison with earlier data would exaggerate the conversion of larger parcels to smaller parcels, and the construction of new structures.

Currently, about two-thirds of privately-owned acres in the Corridor (or slightly less than half of total acreage in the Corridor) are contained in properties 640 acres or more in size. As lands traditionally used for agricultural practices are subdivided into properties smaller than 640 acres, agricultural uses generally become subordinate to other management objectives, usually with an orientation toward residential use. By establishing easements on some of those lands, open space characteristics are protected and ensured into the future.

Nearly 75 percent of the private properties in the Corridor are less than 1 acre in size. This is not surprising since the Great Falls region – which includes the city of Great Falls and accounts for 80 percent of all properties in the Corridor – has thousands of in-town residences. What may not be as evident, though, is that these small properties only account for about one percent of total privately-owned acreage in the Corridor (about 0.5% of all acreage). More than 80 percent of the total privately owned land mass in the Corridor is contained in holdings of 160 acres or greater. In addition to the largest number of small properties, the rural Great Falls region also accounts for the largest number of properties 640 acres or greater. The Great Falls Region clearly represents an urban-rural interface, containing both large and small private properties. The Hauser-Holter Region is distinctive because it contains the largest percentage of properties 5-20 acres in size and the smallest percentage of properties less than 1 acre in size, indicating more prevalent “ranchette” type subdivision of larger lots.

Table 3-4.3: 2015 Private Property Distribution					
Property Size		Hebgen-Madison Region	Hauser-Holter Region	Great Falls Region	Missouri-Madison Corridor
<1 acre	# Properties	1,613	244	18,105	19,943
	% of Properties	46%	12%	83%	73%
	# Acres	576	122	4,209	4,896
	% of Acres	<1%	<1%	2%	1%
1-<5 acres	# Properties	727	508	1,869	3,387
	% of Properties	21%	26%	9%	12%
	# Acres	1,716	1,257	4,412	7,346
	% of Acres	1%	1%	2%	1%
5-<20 acres	# Properties	568	763	1,089	2,397
	% of Properties	16%	38%	5%	9%
	# Acres	6,175	8,427	10,883	25,253
	% of Acres	3%	6%	3%	5%
20-<40 acres	# Properties	318	282	366	958
	% of Properties	9%	14%	2%	4%
	# Acres	7,309	6,877	9,302	23,276
	% of Acres	3%	5%	3%	4%
40-<160 acres	# Properties	140	114	211	463
	% of Properties	4%	6%	1%	2%
	# Acres	11,219	9,020	16,711	36,642
	% of Acres	5%	7%	6%	7%
160-<640 acres	# Properties	96	52	162	305
	% of Properties	3%	3%	1%	1%
	# Acres	31,263	16,080	54,707	100,055
	% of Acres	14%	11%	21%	18%
640+ acres	# Properties	59	22	98	168
	% of Properties	2%	1%	1%	1%
	# Acres	157,412	98,860	177,744	359,511
	% of Acres	73%	70%	63%	65%
Total*	# Properties	3,521	1,985	21,900	27,321
	% of Corridor Properties	13%	7%	80%	100%
	# Acres	215,671	140,643	277,967	556,979
	% of Corridor Acres	39%	25%	50%	100%
	# Structures	3,518	1,689	27,531	32,738
	% of Structures in Corridor	11%	5%	38%	100%

*Totals may not add up due to rounding. Some properties overlap two regions and are counted in both.

Figure 3-4.2: 2015 Regional Distribution of Numbers of Private Properties by Size Class

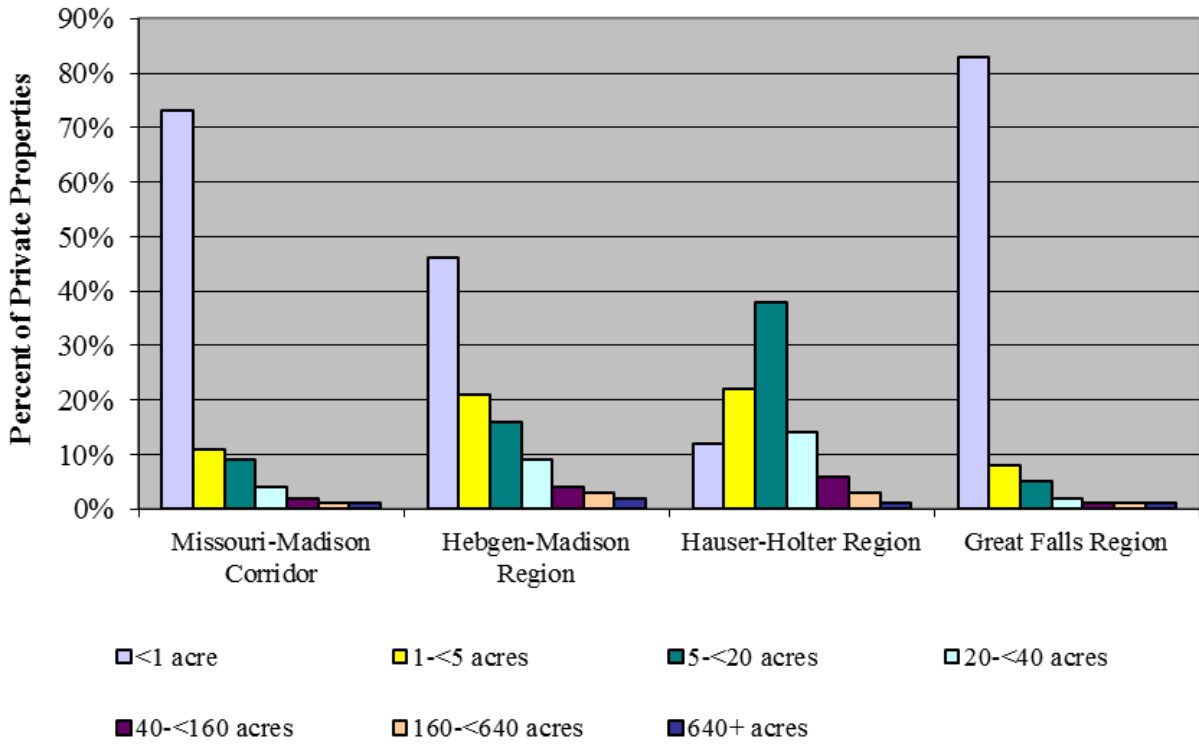


Figure 3-4.3: 2015 Regional Distribution of Private Property Acreage by Size Class

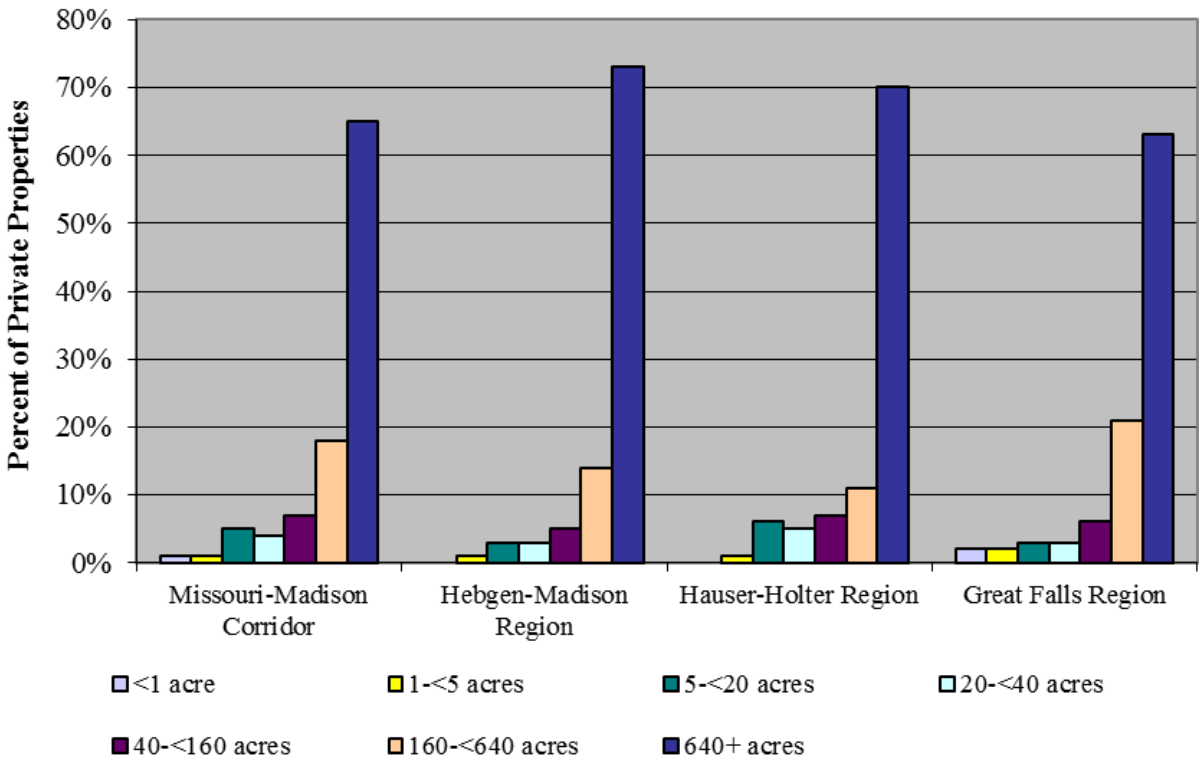


Figure 3-4.4: Private Properties by Size, Missouri-Madison Corridor 2015

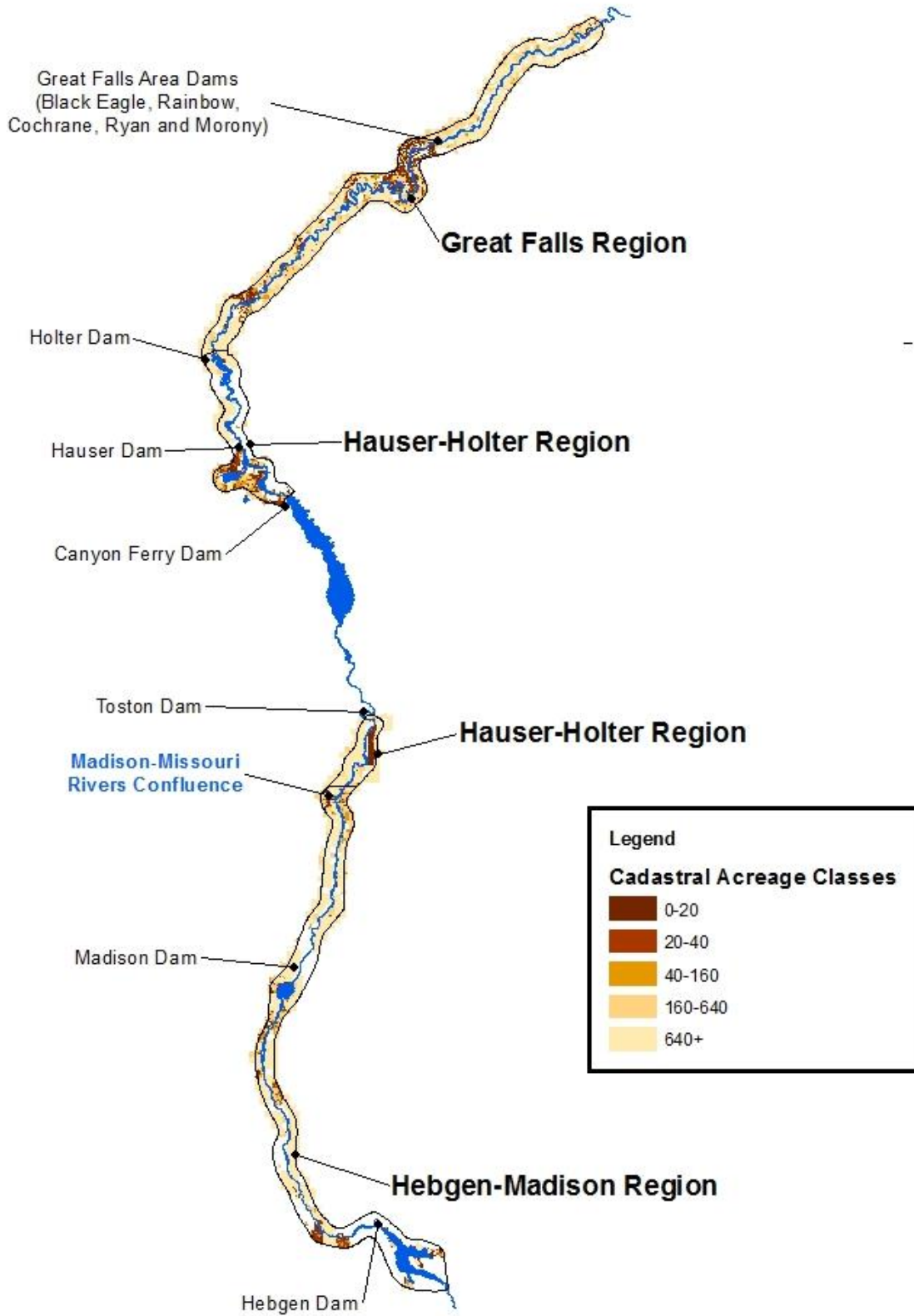
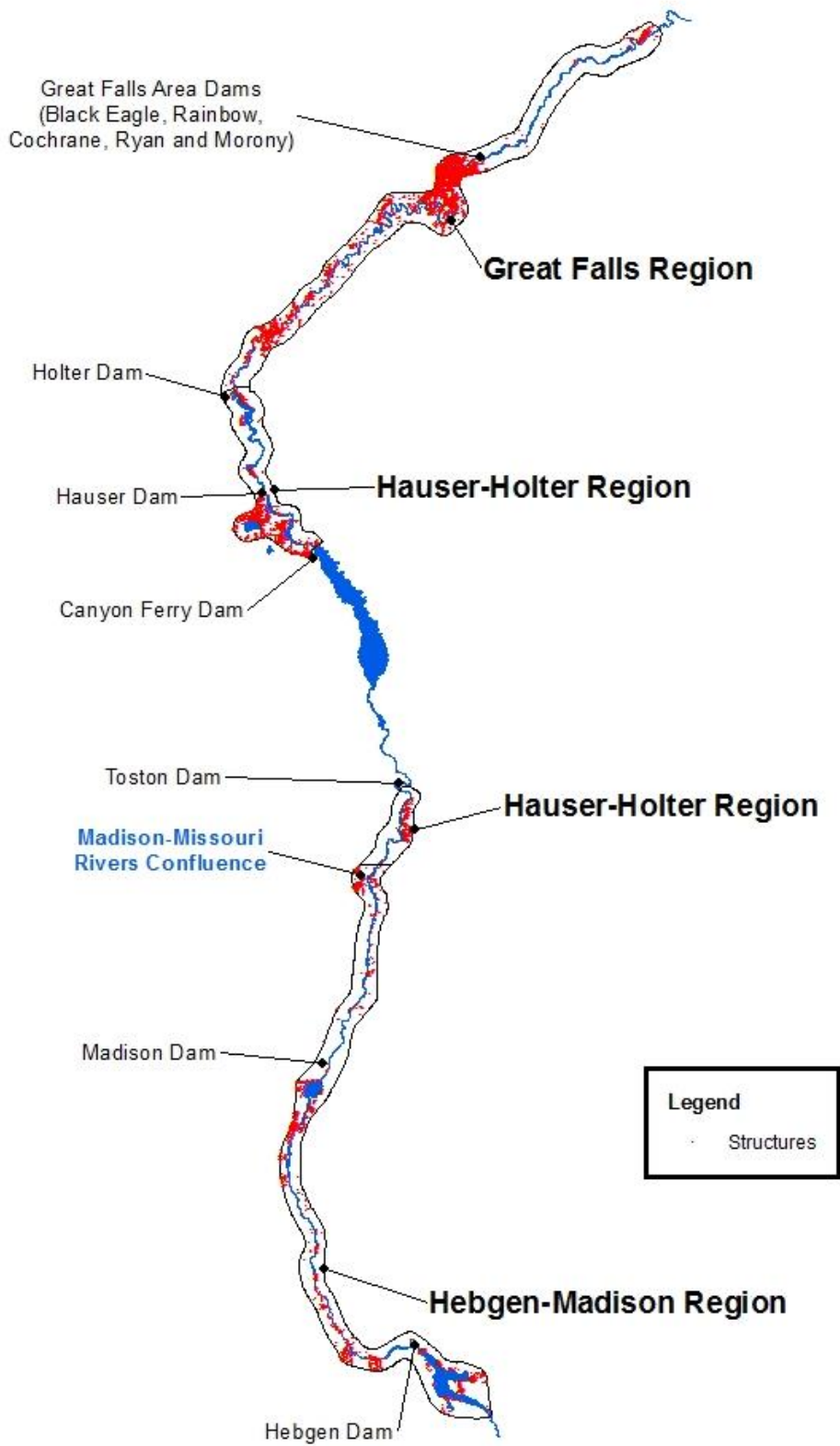


Figure 3-4.5: Structure Locations, Missouri-Madison Corridor 2015



Chapter 3-5: Recreation Amenities and Resources

There are a number of resource elements that come together to give the Corridor its unique character: water and terrestrial habitat, wildlife and fisheries, and visual and recreation resources. The following summary gives a perspective of the aesthetic and recreation resources of the Project Area. A summary of recreation facilities available at Corridor sites is included in Appendix A1. Regional maps showing location of public and private recreation sites in the Corridor are included in Appendix A3.

At the primitive end of the spectrum, there are two designated Wilderness areas: the Gates of the Mountains in the Hauser-Holter Region and the Lee Metcalf Beartrap Canyon Unit in the Hebgen-Madison Region. These areas, along with other Wilderness Study Areas and roadless areas, offer the most primitive settings for activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, backpacking, white water floating, and wildlife viewing.

Many recreation sites in the Project Area provide rural settings that are developed to varying degrees and include amenities such as restrooms, picnic areas, boat launches, designated swimming areas, or fishing access. Still other sites – generally in the Great Falls Region – offer urban settings for trail-based activities such as walking, jogging, and bicycling. Opportunities for sight-seeing, historical interpretation and nature discovery are dispersed throughout the Project Area.

Wilderness Areas

The Lee Metcalf Wilderness is located within the Hebgen-Madison Region and is managed by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge and Gallatin National Forests. Two units of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness are in the vicinity of the Hebgen area. One unit is the 141,000-acre Taylor-Hilgard Unit. The other unit is the 34,000-acre Monument Mountain Unit which abuts the northwest corner of Yellowstone National Park and is connected to the Taylor-Hilgard Unit through the Cabin Creek Wildlife Management Area.

The Madison Dam and Ennis Reservoir border the BLM-administered Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness, a 6,000-acre unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. This area is popular for hiking, fishing, and whitewater rafting on the Madison River. The Trail Creek Day Use Area, located at the head of the canyon, is designed for handicapped access for fishing, picnicking, and sightseeing.

There is one Wilderness in the immediate vicinity of the Holter area, the Gates of the Mountain Wilderness, and it is administered by the Helena National Forest. The 28,492-acre wilderness lies within one-quarter mile of Holter Reservoir.

BLM Wilderness Study Areas

There are two WSAs in the immediate vicinity of the Holter area. The BLM administers both the Sleeping Giant and Sheep Creek WSAs on Holter Reservoir's west shore. The Sleeping Giant WSA is 6,487 acres and the Sheep Creek WSA is 3,927 acres. The two areas are separated by a 100kV Towhead transmission line which runs from Holter Powerhouse to East Helena.

National Parks

Although not entirely within the Project Area, the western border of Yellowstone National Park, the nation's first national park, lies less than one mile east of Hebgen Reservoir and consists of approximately 2.2 million acres. Its main features are the world's largest geyser area; the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River; more than two dozen mountains over 8,000 ft. high; large wildlife populations; and Yellowstone Lake, providing excellent boating, canoeing, fishing, and wildlife observation opportunities.

Facilities in the Park include an extensive trail system, visitor centers, developed campgrounds and concession-operated facilities, hotels, cabin complexes, automobile service stations, grocery and curio stores, and medical centers.

The Park is managed under a General Management Plan and is subject to management strategies of the Greater Yellowstone Area Management Plan, which covers parts of six national forests, two national parks, and two national wildlife refuges. The contiguous portions of these parks, forests, and refuges encompass roughly 1.7 million acres.

Visitors from across the country and the world visit Yellowstone National Park. The implication to this Plan is that the upper Madison, particularly Hebgen Reservoir, experiences a more diverse mix of visitors than other parts of the Project Area. The recreation facilities already developed in this area reflect this type of visitor use.

National Trails

There are several federally designated National Trails in the Project Area including the following:

- Refuge Point Trail - located between Hebgen Dam and Quake Lake
- East Side Trail of the Bear Trap Canyon Wilderness - located east of Ennis Reservoir
- The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail - located on the river and reservoirs from Three Forks through Fort Benton

National Wild and Scenic Rivers and Waterways

The 149-mile Missouri River segment that begins at the city of Fort Benton has been managed by the BLM since 1976 as the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River. This Wild and Scenic river segment begins at the lower end of the Corridor.

There are three river segments that are eligible for designation as National Wild and Scenic Rivers.

- The segment of the Madison River from the National Forest boundary near the Madison Slide to Hebgen Dam was recognized in the Gallatin National Forest Plan (GNFP) as meeting the eligibility criteria for potential classification as a "Recreational River" in 1987. Amendments to the GNFP in 1993 added forest-wide direction to manage eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers to protect their outstanding remarkable values and to practice management activities that will comply with the standards for Wild and Scenic Rivers from the Forest Service Handbook. This direction has been extended to the potential "Recreational River" segment below Hebgen Dam.
- A segment of the Missouri River that begins immediately downstream of Hauser Dam has been deemed preliminarily eligible for designation within the National Wild and Scenic River System based on studies done through the Bureau of Land Management's Butte Resource Management Plan. The BLM administers 3.1 miles of lands on the west side of the river and the Helena National Forest administers 2.5 miles of lands on the east side of the river. A final recommendation to Congress is pending the outcome of a Suitability Study to be conducted by the Helena National Forest. Due to the preliminary eligibility, that segment of the Missouri River will be managed to protect its outstanding remarkable resource value and potential for classification until suitability studies can be completed.
- A 4.5-mile segment of Beaver Creek, located downstream from Hauser Dam, has been deemed eligible for designation within the Wild and Scenic River System. The segment extends from the junction with the Missouri River east to private land located in Nelson and is managed by the

Helena National Forest. The potential classification for the segment is “Recreational with an Outstanding Value of Fisheries”. Due to its eligibility, that segment of Beaver Creek will be protected by the Forest Service to maintain its outstanding remarkable resource value and potential classification until suitability studies can be completed.

Visual Resources

The vast majority of the lands within the Project Area are private with a mixture of USFS, BLM, and State lands. The federal agencies have current inventories and management guidelines for visual resources on lands under the BLM and USFS jurisdiction; however, there are no visual resource guidelines available for private and state lands within the Corridor.

Significant changes to the visual quality along Corridor rivers and reservoirs have occurred due to ongoing development of homes built near shorelines. The visual impacts of this development to recreationists’ views are generally perceived as negative, as evidenced by responses to Visitor Surveys.

Residential clusters in the Hebgen area are common along the north shore as well as on the Horse Butte Peninsula and in the area just south of the South Fork Arm. Summer cabins are common at several sites along the south shore of the reservoir.

The most prominent residential clusters along the river between Hebgen Dam and the town of Ennis are situated downstream of Quake Lake between Reynolds Pass FAS and Madison River Campground, and in the area of the Varney Bridge FAS. Between Ennis and the town of Three Forks, the largest residential clusters occur along the west shore of Ennis Reservoir and downstream of Red Mountain Campground between Black’s Ford FAS and Grey Cliff FAS.

In the Hauser Reservoir area, residential clusters are located in the Prickly Pear Creek and Black Sandy State Park areas northeast of Lake Helena and along the west shore of Hauser Reservoir near Lakeside. Residential clusters are not common around most of Holter Reservoir, but three main clusters occur in the American Bar area on the east shore of Upper Holter Reservoir, along the west shore of the Oxbow area, and along the east shore of lower Holter Reservoir between the lower end of the canyon and the dam.

The landscape in the Great Falls Region from below Holter Dam to the city of Great Falls is scattered with residential development. The Great Falls municipal waterfront area contains developments ranging from city parks to commercial and industrial development. There is little residential development along the river between Great Falls and the town of Fort Benton.

For more information on where residences occur, refer to the structure location maps in Chapter 3-4 and Appendix A4.

Existing Recreation Sites and Facilities

The Missouri-Madison Corridor boundaries are defined as one mile from the bank on each side of the Missouri and Madison rivers and reservoirs along 320 river miles from Hebgen Reservoir to the town of Fort Benton, excluding Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Toston Reservoir, and the river segment between them.

The Corridor provides a diverse and extensive set of recreation opportunities, including public and private campgrounds, fishing access sites, boat launches, picnic areas, trails, day-use areas, interpretive facilities, overlooks, RV parks, resorts, and other amenities. There are a total of 124 designated public campgrounds and day-use areas in the Missouri-Madison Corridor in addition to opportunities for recreation at numerous

dispersed sites. Of these designated facilities, 57 are located in the Hebgen-Madison Region, 23 in the Hauser-Holter Region, and 44 in the Great Falls Region. See Appendix A1 for a complete listing of existing public recreation sites and facilities.

Public Campgrounds - The Corridor supports 37 developed campgrounds and 11 dispersed campgrounds, providing a total camping capacity of more than 869 sites. Of the inventory of developed sites, 14 campgrounds offer sites along reservoirs and 23 campgrounds offer sites along river reaches. Of the inventory of dispersed campgrounds, 7 campgrounds offer sites along reservoirs and 4 campgrounds offer sites along river segments.

Interpretive Sites - The Corridor offers 48 sites with interpretive signage or activities. Of these, 28 are associated with reservoirs and 33 with river segments.

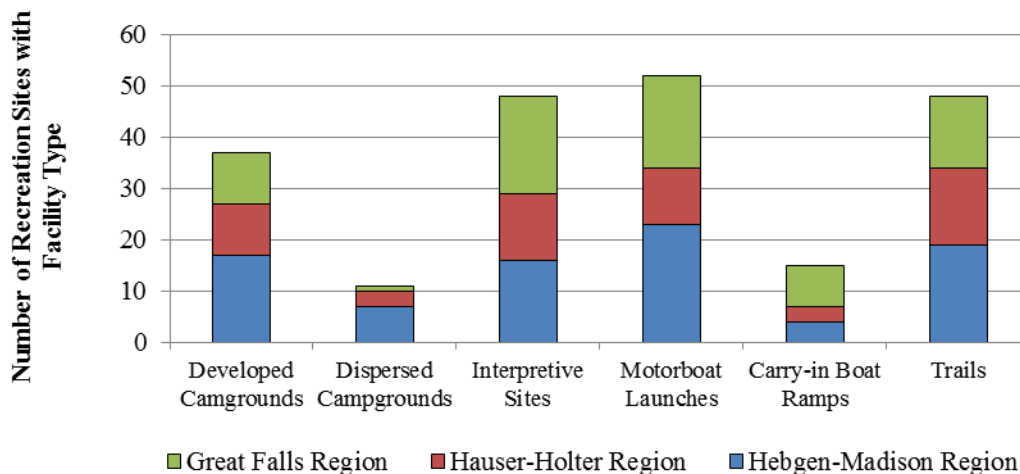
Motorboat Launches – There are a total of 52 public sites in the Corridor that offer motorboat launching ramps. Sixteen are associated with reservoirs and the remaining 36 are on river segments.

Carry-In Boat Ramps- There are a total of 15 public sites in the Corridor that offer carry-in boat launching ramps. Ten are associated with the reservoirs and the remaining 5 are on river segments.

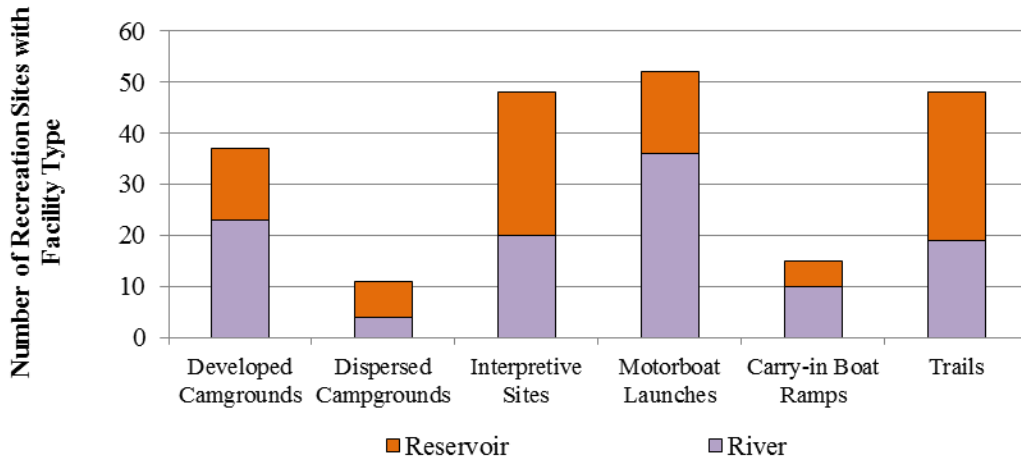
Trails – There are 48 sites in the Corridor offering trail hiking opportunities or trailhead facilities. Of these, 29 are situated along reservoirs – especially in the Great Falls Regions – and 19 are along river segments.

The charts that follow graphically illustrate dispersal of recreation site facilities in the Corridor by region and by river reach or reservoir (Figures 3-5.1 and 3-5.2).

Figure 3-5.1: Breakdown of 2015 Recreation Opportunities by Region



**Figure 3-5.2: Breakdown of 2015 Recreation Opportunities
by Association with Reservoirs and Rivers**



Hebgen-Madison Region

Hebgen Reservoir, located less than one mile from Yellowstone National Park's western boundary, is used heavily for summer recreation. The Hebgen area is a destination site and also receives considerable "overflow" and stop-over visits from Yellowstone National Park. The reservoir and adjacent area are used for water-based recreational activities as well as land-based day-use activities and overnight camping. The USFS administers the public lands and recreation sites adjacent to the reservoir. Private residences in the Hebgen area are predominately seasonal vacation homes, though a few year-round residences exist on the more accessible north shore.

Quake Lake, located approximately two miles downstream from Hebgen Reservoir, was formed in 1959 when a severe earthquake, measuring 7.5 on the Richter Scale, jolted the area and formed a natural dam across the Madison River. Quake Lake provides historical and geological displays at a USFS Visitor Center and a memorial display for those killed in the earthquake. The Madison River downstream of Quake Lake is classified as a blue ribbon trout fishery. Access and overnight camping sites are dispersed along its shorelines. The majority of private residences along the banks of the Madison River are seasonal vacation homes.

The Madison Dam impounds the reservoir known as Ennis Lake. The reservoir's north shore and the Bear Trap Canyon are used heavily for year-round recreation. Year-round access to the Madison Development is provided by a county road that parallels the east and north shores of the reservoir. The reservoir and the area immediately adjacent to it are used for numerous water-based recreational activities, day-use activities, and limited overnight camping. The BLM and FWP administer the public lands and recreation sites adjacent to the reservoir. While most private homes in the town of Ennis are year-round residences, many along the shorelines of Ennis Lake are seasonal.

Public Campgrounds - The Hebgen-Madison Region provides recreation users with developed and undeveloped camping opportunities along the shorelines of the rivers and reservoirs. In all, 24 public sites currently exist with a combined capacity of 431 campsites.

Interpretive Sites - The Hebgen-Madison Region has 16 publicly-maintained sites with integrated interpretation. Much of the interpretation relates to the 1959 earthquake that left lasting scars and evidence on the landscape.

Boat Launches – There are a total of 23 public sites in the Hebgen-Madison Region that offer motorboat launching ramps and 4 that offer carry-in launches.

Trails – There are 19 sites in the Hebgen-Madison Region offering trail access or trailhead facilities.

Hauser-Holter Region

Hauser Reservoir is located approximately 14 miles northeast of Helena, Montana. Hauser Reservoir is made up of two bodies of water commonly known as Hauser Reservoir and Lake Helena, the latter of which forms the southwest arm of the reservoir. Year-round access to Hauser Reservoir is provided via county roads. The reservoir and the adjacent area are used heavily for numerous water-based recreational activities as well as land-based day-use activities and overnight camping.

Downstream from Hauser Dam the Missouri River flows through a 4-mile canyon before emptying into Holter Reservoir. The Holter area is used heavily for numerous water-based recreation activities, day-use activities, and overnight camping. The Holter area provides access to the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness and Beartooth Wildlife Management Area. Year-round access to the reservoir is provided via a county road along a portion of the reservoir's east shore.

The Hauser and Holter areas are considered destination sites for area residents, including those from Helena, Great Falls, Missoula, and Bozeman. BLM, USFS, and FWP administer public lands and recreation sites adjacent to the reservoirs. Many year-round residences exist along the shorelines of Hauser and Holter Lakes. Some seasonal vacation homes exist along the north shoreline of the lake near Holter Dam while some seasonal homes in the oxbow regions of Holter are accessible only from the water.

Public Campgrounds - The Hauser-Holter area provides recreation users with 10 developed public campgrounds and 3 undeveloped campgrounds, with a capacity of 308 sites.

Interpretive Sites - The Hauser-Holter Region has 13 sites with integrated interpretation. Much of the interpretive history relates to the Lewis & Clark Expedition and the history of wildfire activity and events in the area.

Boat Launches - A total of 11 public motorboat launches and 3 carry-in launches on Hauser and Holter Reservoirs. No motorized boat launches are located in the steep-sided river canyon between the two reservoirs.

Trails – Fifteen sites in the Hauser-Holter Region offer hiking trail opportunities or trailhead facilities.

Great Falls Region

The Great Falls Region includes the river segments below Holter Dam downstream to the Great Falls Area Developments of Black Eagle, Rainbow, Cochrane, Ryan, and Morony Dams, and on to the town of Fort Benton.

The area downstream of Holter Dam is known for its fishing opportunities accessible from numerous Fishing Access Sites administered by FWP along Recreation Road and Interstate 90 that closely parallel the river. Because these facilities are located uniformly and conveniently along the river, the area functions as a recreation system rather than a collection of individual sites. Recreation users often visit many sites on their fishing or camping outings. Four river access sites in the Great Falls Region were added to mitigate for closures of Cochrane, Ryan, and Morony Reservoirs to boating, floating, swimming and sailing by the FWP Commission.

Year-round residences dominate the Great Falls Region, both along the river reaches and the shorelines of reservoirs. Some seasonal businesses and vacation homes exist on the Missouri River below Holter Dam and above Great Falls.

Most of the Great Falls Developments are not considered destination sites. However, they supplement the City of Great Falls' recreation facilities. Cochrane, Ryan, and Morony Reservoirs are closed to water-based recreation uses due to their steep shorelines and reservoir levels that can fluctuate up to 10 feet with project operations. The Rivers Edge Trail, North Shore Natural Area, and Ryan-Morony pedestrian-bike trail provide valued shoreline recreation opportunities for area residents and visitors.

Public Campgrounds - There are no public overnight camping facilities in the Great Falls municipal area, but sites upstream and downstream offer nearly a dozen camping opportunities with a combined capacity of over 50 campsites.

Interpretive Sites – There are 19 interpretative facilities in the Great Falls Region. Most interpretive material is centered around the Lewis and Clark Expedition and sites they explored around the Great Falls area, as well as the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River. The Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center provides a regional destination for visitors exploring the history of the Lewis & Clark Expedition.

Boat Launches –Eighteen public boat launch facilities are located within the Great Falls Region for motorized boat launching, while another 8 sites offer carry-in launching.

Trails – Numerous sites in the Great Falls Region offer access to the extensive River's Edge Trail. The trail extends over 50 miles and runs along the shoreline from Oddfellows Park to Box Elder Coulee on the south shore and from West Bank Park to Black Eagle Memorial Island and from Rainbow Dam to Sulfur Spring on the north shore. In addition, water-trail access for the Upper Missouri River is available at the Fort Benton Motorboat Launch.

Changes to Recreation Amenities Inventory

The 1996 Plan identified 32 recreation projects to be completed in the Corridor as part of the Project 2188 License. Of those, 30 projects have been completed, resulting in substantial improvements and additions to the inventory of recreation amenities available to the public. Recreation projects that have been completed under the FERC license and related public involvement prior to issuance of that license include:

- 10 developed campgrounds with a combined capacity of 257 sites.
- 4 dispersed campgrounds with a combined capacity of 31 sites.

- 17 opportunities for interpretation and education
- 19 sites with boat launches or ramps
- 21 sites with hiking trails or developed trailheads

In addition, 86 projects with a total value of nearly \$7 million have benefited public recreation in the Corridor since 2007. Grant awards for these projects reflect a combination of River Fund earnings in the amount of \$3.2 million, and NorthWestern Energy contributions of \$1 million, while cooperating agencies and partners have funded the remaining \$2.6 million. Projects have included site upgrades, improvements and expansion, construction of new sites, acquisition of new parcels, and creation of new programs for public recreation in the Corridor.

See Appendix A2 for further detail on projects completed in the Corridor under the FERC license, Chapter 2-6 for detail on projects financed by the River Fund grants and NorthWestern Energy match funds, and Appendix A3 for maps with recreation site locations.

Chapter 3-6: Recreation Use and Visitation

The Missouri and Madison Rivers have long been known as excellent sources of fishing and recreation opportunities. With influences from books, magazines, and electronic media, as well as marketing to nonresident visitors as a vacation destination and to Montana residents to rediscover their backyard, popularity of these rivers continues to grow each year. Designations such as the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River and history such as the Lewis and Clark Expedition also add to the recognition of the Project Area at the national level. As a whole, this area continues to draw large numbers of visitors.

Statewide Nonresident Visitation to Montana

The Missouri-Madison Corridor spans much of central Montana and areas east of the Rocky Mountains. It intercepts major travel routes to other recreational draws to the state (Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks) and thoroughfares (Interstates 90 and 15). Four of the state's major airports are located in areas very near the Corridor. Together these factors combine to provide easy access to the many fishing and recreational opportunities within the Corridor for nonresident visitors to Montana.

The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at The University of Montana⁴ produces annual nonresident visitation estimates for the state. Over the 20-year period from 1994 to 2014, visitation to Montana increased 30 percent from 8.7 million visitors in 1994 to 10.9 million visitors in 2014. A decline in growth of nonresident visitation to Montana from 1999-2004 was largely due to closures related to wildfires that occurred in much of the state during those five years. Visitation rebounded in 2005, 2006, and 2007, due at least in part to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration and fewer widespread closures due to fire danger in the midst of hot, dry summers (Figures 3.6-1 and 3.6-2).

Declines in visitation to Montana in 2008 and 2009 were largely due to the economic downturn that began in 2008 which produced historically high gas prices, the third lowest level of consumer confidence in 30 years, high levels of unemployment, and a weakened American dollar, resulting in less pleasure travel and reductions in visitation to Montana.

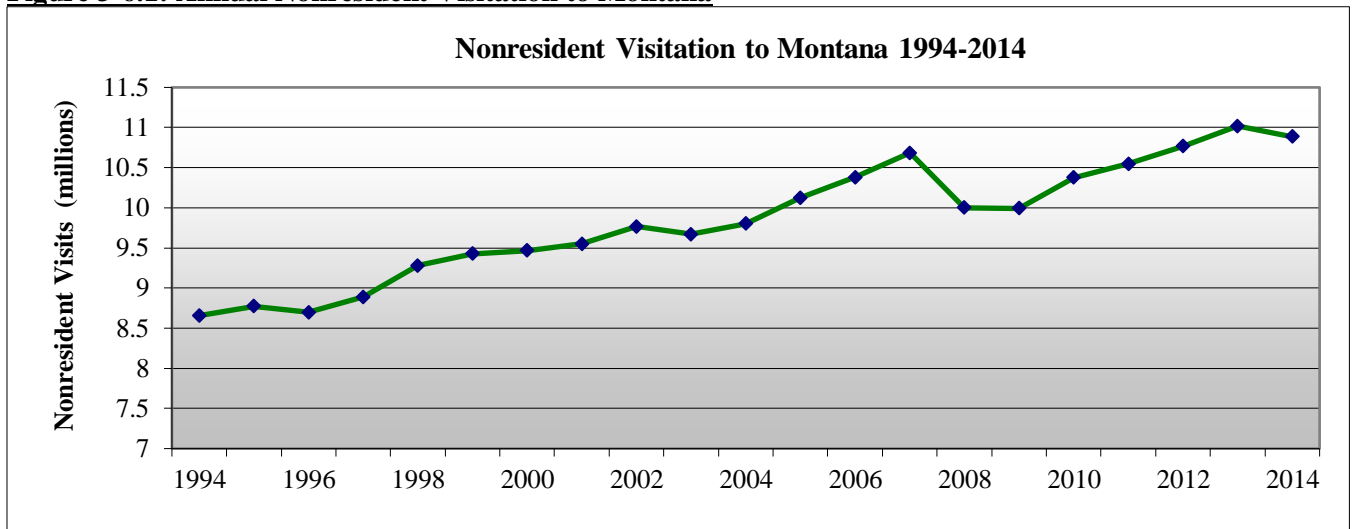
Since the majority of nonresident travelers to Montana travel by car or RV and typically make 20-30 percent of their trip expenditures for fuel, high gas prices were one contributing factor to lower nonresident visitation in 2008 and 2009 (Figure 3-6.3). As Americans adjusted to economic conditions and gas prices became more consistent, travel and recreation once again became important and nonresident visitation to the state rebounded somewhat.

Of the 10.9 million nonresident visitors to Montana in 2014, 22 percent (2.4 million) spent at least one night in Gallatin County, 5.2 percent (568,000) spent at least one night in Lewis & Clark County, and 8.5 percent (929,000) spent at least one night in Cascade County.

Rivers, lakes, open spaces, fishing, and wildlife are main attractions for nonresident visitors to Montana. Of all out-of-state visitors to Cascade, Lewis and Clark, and Gallatin counties, rivers are one attraction to the state for roughly three-fourths of visitor groups, while open space is attractive to about one-third of groups

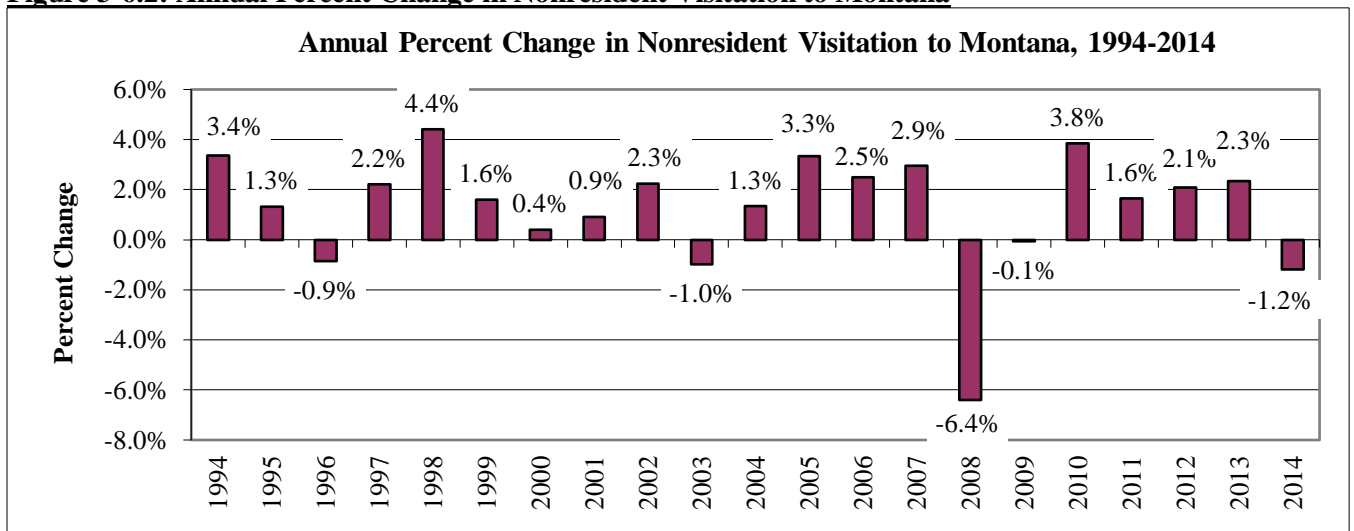
⁴ Source of nonresident travel information: The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, www.itrr.umt.edu, and US Travel Association, www.ustravel.org.

Figure 3-6.1: Annual Nonresident Visitation to Montana



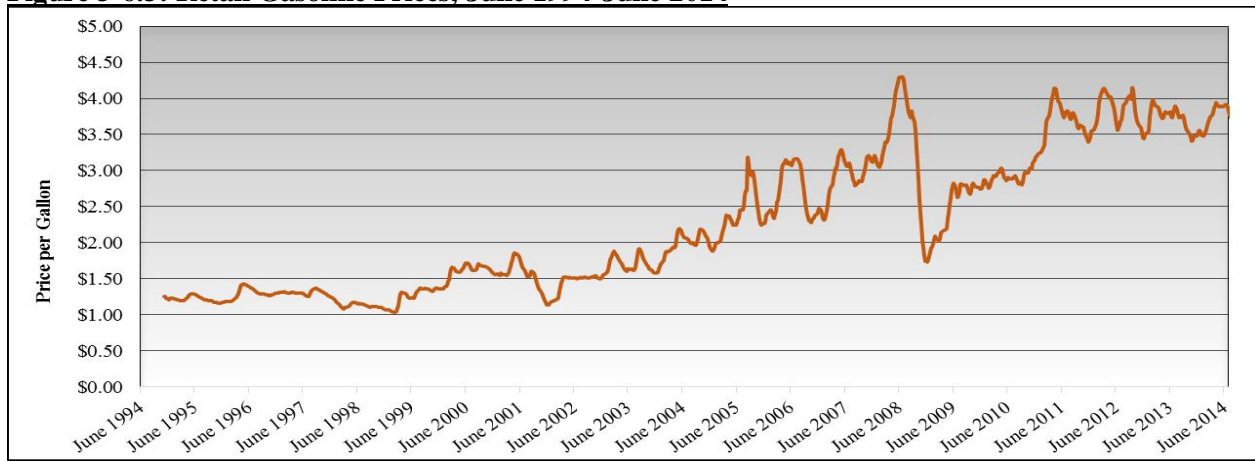
Source: Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, www.itrr.umt.edu

Figure 3-6.2: Annual Percent Change in Nonresident Visitation to Montana



Source: Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, www.itrr.umt.edu

Figure 3-6.3: Retail Gasoline Prices, June 1994-June 2014



Source: Energy Information Administration,

Missouri-Madison Corridor Recreation Visitor Use Counts

NorthWestern Energy launched the Recreation Visitor Use Count Study in 2005 to gain a better understanding of the volume and distribution of use at public recreation sites in the Missouri-Madison Corridor, and to help recreation managers better understand use patterns in each region and the Corridor overall.

Group visits counted at public recreation sites in the Missouri-Madison Corridor (other than city parks in Great Falls) totaled more than 708,000 groups during the summer recreation season of 2014 (Figure 3-6.4). These visits occurred at 95 percent of public recreation sites in the Missouri-Madison Corridor. Total visitation to the Corridor in 2013 and 2014, on average, was roughly 15 percent higher than the average visitation during the previous five years (2008-2012).

Figure 3-6.4: 2014 Summer Visitation to Missouri-Madison Corridor, Total and Regional

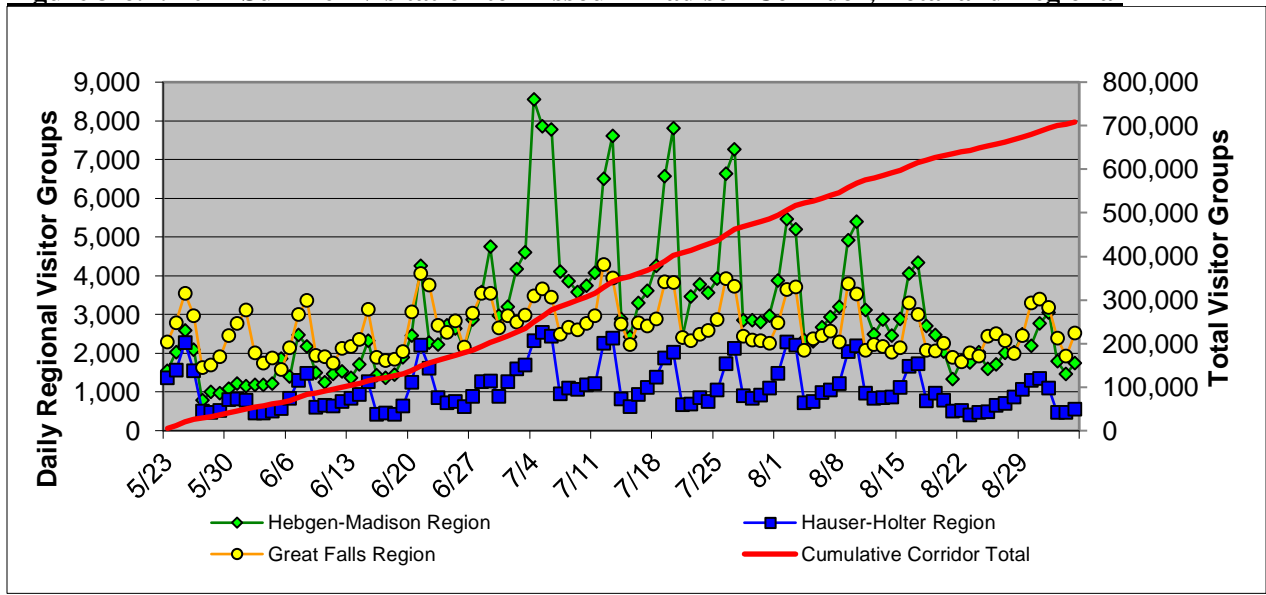
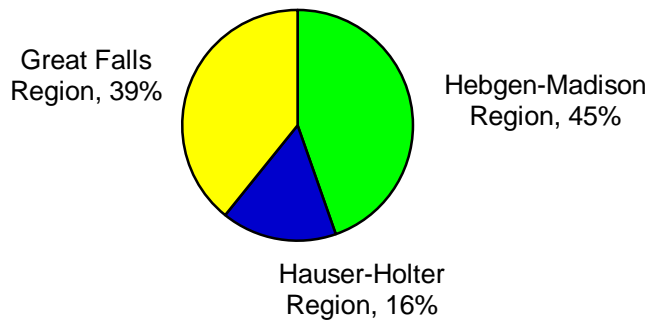


Figure 3-6.5: Percent of Summer 2014 Visitation to Corridor, by Region

The Hebgen-Madison Region accounted for 45 percent of total visitation, the Hauser-Holter region accounted for 16 percent of total visitation, and the Great Falls Region accounted for 39 percent of all visitation in the Corridor in 2014.



Thirty-nine percent of the visitation estimated in the Corridor in 2014 was associated with sites at project reservoirs and 61 percent was associated with sites along river reaches (Figure 3-6.6). Use of the Upper Missouri River accounted for the highest portion of use in the Corridor (25%), though use on the upper and lower portions of the Madison River combined accounted for 35 percent of total use (Figure 3-6.7).

Figure 3-6.6: Percent of Summer 2014 Visitation to Corridor, River vs. Reservoir

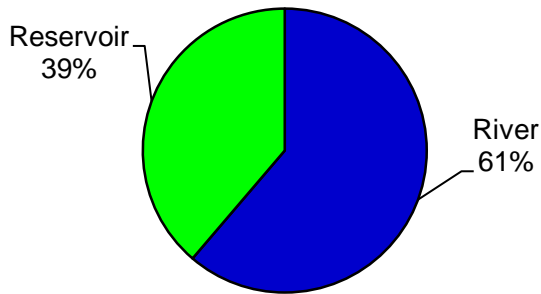
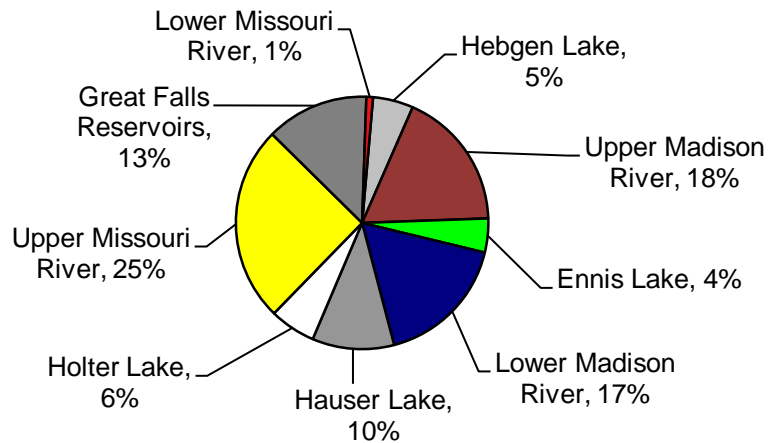


Figure 3-6.7: Percent of Summer 2014 Visitation to Corridor, by River/Reservoir Segment



Corridor Trends for Weekday and Weekend Use

On any given weekday in the early and late portions of the recreation season, roughly 6000 visitor groups recreate in the Missouri-Madison Corridor. This number increases to about 7,000 groups on weekends during the same timeframe. During the peak use months of July and August, these average use levels increase by about 40 percent on weekends and by about 10 percent on weekdays. The number of recreating groups on weekdays is roughly 6500 visitor groups at all recreation sites and weekend use is around 9,900 visitor groups to all recreation sites in the Corridor. Use is not evenly distributed throughout all recreation sites, but is limited to the capacity for individual sites. While the overall number of visitor groups changes slightly each year, use patterns typically do not, as visitation continues to peak on weekends during July and August. Overall, weekday use is more consistent throughout the use season than weekend use (Figures 3-6.8 and 3-6.9).

Figure 3-6.8: Total Summer Daily Visitation to Missouri-Madison Corridor, 2012-2014

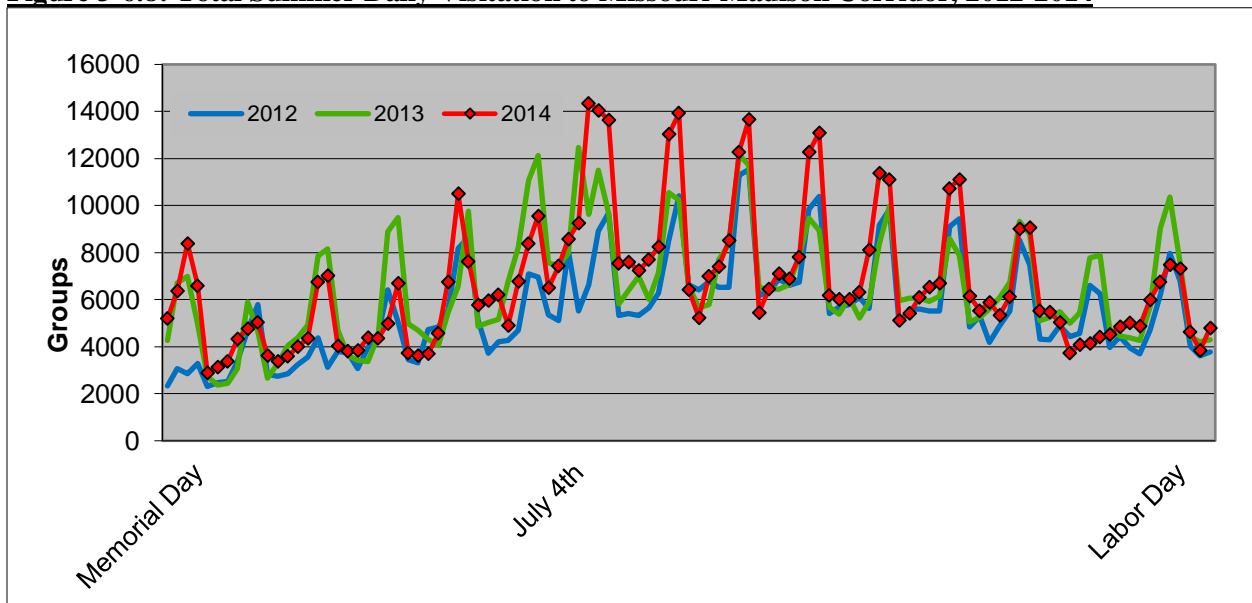
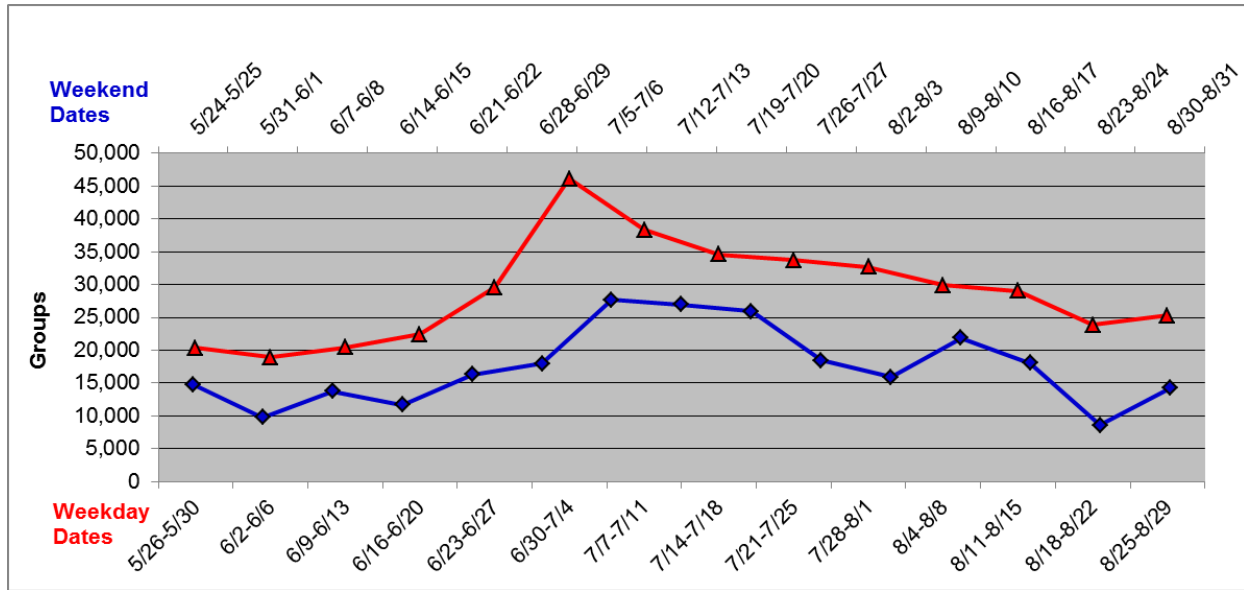


Figure 3-6.9: Summer 2014 Weekday and Weekend Visitation to Missouri-Madison Corridor



Activities and Perceptions of Corridor Visitors

Visitor use at the recreation sites associated with the Project Area occurs in diverse ways, reflecting regionally specific resources and opportunities. Monitoring how and why visitors recreate in the Corridor and their satisfaction with the opportunities, facilities, and resources available to them is an important management component.

Visitor use has been studied five times in the last fifteen years (1995, 1999, 2003, 2008, and 2014). In all studies, randomly sampled visitors completed survey questionnaires. While use levels in the Corridor have steadily increased over these years, visitor satisfaction with trips to recreation sites in the Corridor has also increased. The 2014 study revealed that visitor satisfaction with site and facility conditions is at the highest level since it was first monitored in the mid-1990s.

For many years, the proportion of nonresident visitors in the Corridor decreased while the proportion of Montana residents recreating in the Corridor increased. This trend reversed slightly between 2008 and 2014, when a higher proportion of nonresident visitors and first time visitors were recorded than six years prior.

Visitors choose recreation sites primarily because of their good fishing, scenic beauty and ease of access. Good facilities were also a prominent reason for choosing sites in the Missouri-Madison Corridor, and historical significance was important in the Great Falls region. Camping and fishing were the most popular activities in the Hebgen area. Fishing and non-motorized boating were popular water activities in the Ennis area. Fishing, camping, and powerboating were popular in the Hauser-Holter Region, with sightseeing, fishing, picnicking, and walking/day hiking being popular in the Great Falls area.

Visitor satisfaction with facility conditions in 2014 was equal to or higher than those in 2008 in all regions. The exceptions to this were satisfaction with rules and restrictions and the number of fish caught in the Hebgen Region, though these decreases in satisfaction were very slight. Overall, visitors consider cleanliness, campsite conditions, and sanitation to be the most important characteristics of a recreation site.

Across all geographic regions, visitors have relatively low perceptions of crowding, reflecting general satisfaction related to experiences relative to the settings. In general, crowding doesn't appear to be any more of a problem in 2014 than it was in 2008/03.

Overall, recreation use of the sites has been relatively stable over the twenty-year study period. This suggests that the recreation opportunities are mature and not quickly changing in type or popularity. Results also suggest that the sites attract a stable clientele that is well matched to the opportunities. More information from the 2014 visitor study, including trend analysis, is available in Appendix B and at www.missourimadison.com.

Montana Statewide Angling Survey

Another measure of use of the Missouri-Madison Corridor by Montana residents and nonresident visitors is the Statewide Angling Survey conducted by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The year-long survey begins in March and concludes at the end of February each study year, and collects information related to the number of days spent fishing on Montana water bodies as well as satisfaction with the fishing experience and ratings of crowding.

Results from these surveys reveal that 2013 angler days on the Madison River increased by 12 percent from 2009, by 53 percent from 2011, and nearly doubled from 1999 to 2013. The sharp decline in use in 2011 was likely due to a high water year, which impacted fishing conditions, while low runoff in 2013 created adequate fishing conditions early in 2013. Angler days on the Missouri River increased by 61 percent from 2011 to 2013, which was the highest year on record since 1999. Nonresident visitors have become more prominent among the angling population on the Missouri River above Cascade in recent years, with a marked increase proportionally beginning in 2007 (Table 3-6.1).

Table 3-6.1: Estimated Angling Days per Year, 1999-2013 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Creel Survey Results						
	Madison River: Hebgen Dam to Ennis Reservoir			Missouri River: Holter Dam to Cascade, MT		
	Estimated Angler Days	% Resident	% Nonresident	Estimated Angler Days	% Resident	% Nonresident
1999	69,370	32%	68%	111,203	79%	21%
2001	86,932	30%	70%	123,472	69%	31%
2003	115,342	26%	74%	106,447	61%	39%
2005	116,345	25%	75%	93,229	64%	36%
2007	106,330	26%	74%	78,468	68%	32%
2009	120,910	32%	68%	106,746	63%	37%
2011	88,252	19%	80%	105,986	55%	45%
2013	134,833	24%	76%	170,850	59%	41%

Source: Montana Fisheries Information System, www.fwp.mt.gov.

Average angler ratings for satisfaction and crowding on Madison River segments are provided in Table 3-6.2. Overall, angler satisfaction on Hebgen Reservoir increased from 2009 to 2011, though resident satisfaction declined while nonresident satisfaction improved. During this same timeframe, crowding decreased for all anglers combined, though resident ratings of crowding increased while nonresident ratings decreased.

On the Upper Madison River from Hebgen Dam to Madison Dam, there was an overall increase in angler satisfaction and decrease in crowding for residents and nonresidents alike from 2009 to 2011. The 2011 ratings show a reversal in satisfaction trends on this segment, which had been declining since 2001.

On the Lower Madison River from Madison Dam to Missouri Headwaters, angler satisfaction increased from 2009 to 2011 overall, though satisfaction for resident anglers was relatively unchanged from 2009. Crowding decreased over the entire timeframe, though largely due to nonresident ratings as residents tended to rate crowding only slightly lower in 2011 than in 2009.

Table 3-6.2: Average Angler Ratings for All Anglers, Resident Anglers, and Nonresident Anglers on Madison River Segments, March – February study years						
	Average Satisfaction Rating All Anglers	Average Satisfaction Rating Residents	Average Satisfaction Rating Nonresidents	Average Crowding Rating All Anglers	Average Crowding Rating Residents	Average Crowding Rating Nonresidents
	Scale: 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)			Scale: 1 (not at all crowded) to 5 (very crowded)		
Madison River Segment						
Hebgen Reservoir						
2001	3.18	3.14	3.19	2.21	2.54	2.43
2005	2.93	2.94	2.92	2.45	2.82	2.30
2007	2.90	3.20	2.85	2.49	2.81	2.43
2009	2.90	3.11	2.80	2.29	2.17	2.34
2011	2.96	2.72	3.01	2.15	2.34	2.11
Hebgen Dam to Madison Dam						
2001	3.23	3.09	3.29	2.83	2.86	2.44
2005	3.08	2.95	3.13	2.71	2.95	2.62
2007	3.06	3.09	3.05	2.67	2.96	2.55
2009	3.02	2.88	3.09	2.52	2.80	2.40
2011	3.14	3.10	3.15	2.29	2.43	2.25
Madison Dam to Missouri Headwaters						
2001	3.05	3.07	3.03	2.61	2.83	2.21
2005	2.87	2.74	3.04	2.50	2.67	2.30
2007	2.93	2.90	2.97	2.36	2.57	2.05
2009	2.71	2.68	2.76	2.26	2.35	2.12
2011	2.82	2.67	2.94	2.02	2.31	1.79

Source: Most current available Angling Pressure Surveys, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, www.fwp.mt.gov.

Average angler ratings for satisfaction and crowding on the Missouri River are provided in Table 3-6.3. Angler data for the Hauser Reservoir is inconsistent due to the manner in which the segment was divided during study years.

Resident and nonresident anglers on Holter Lake disagreed regarding satisfaction and crowding between 2009 and 2011. While overall satisfaction (for all anglers) increased and crowding decreased, resident anglers tended to feel less satisfied and more crowded than two years prior while nonresident anglers felt more satisfied and less crowded.

Angler satisfaction on the Missouri River from Holter Dam to the town of Cascade increased overall, though differed between residents and nonresidents. Residents gave a higher satisfaction rating in 2011 while nonresidents gave a lower satisfaction rating compared to 2009. Crowding decreased on this segment for resident and nonresidents alike from 2009 to 2011.

Angler satisfaction on the Missouri River between Great Falls and Fort Benton decreased overall between 2009 and 2011, though nonresidents rated it higher than two years prior while residents rated it lower. All anglers agree, however, that the segment was less crowded in 2011 than in 2009.

Table 3-6.3: Average Angler Ratings for All Anglers, Resident Anglers, and Nonresident Anglers on Missouri River, March – February study years

	Average Satisfaction Rating All Anglers	Average Satisfaction Rating Residents	Average Satisfaction Rating Nonresidents	Average Crowding Rating All Anglers	Average Crowding Rating Residents	Average Crowding Rating Nonresidents
	Scale: 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)			Scale: 1 (not at all crowded) to 5 (very crowded)		
Missouri River Segment						
Canyon Ferry Dam to Hauser Dam (Hauser Lake)						
2001	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2005	2.58	2.45	3.14	2.30	2.52	1.29
2007	2.50	2.50	0	3.50	3.50	0.00
2009-2011	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hauser Dam to Holter Dam (Holter Lake)						
2001	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2005	2.80	2.65	3.42	2.71	2.79	2.35
2007	2.97	3.33	2.10	2.60	2.96	1.70
2009	3.10	3.12	3.02	2.54	2.71	1.94
2011	3.17	2.93	3.56	2.35	2.49	2.12
Canyon Ferry Dam to Holter Dam (Hauser Lake and Holter Lake)						
2001	2.95	2.92	3.06	2.62	2.70	2.36
2005	2.58	2.78	2.00	2.83	2.89	2.67
2007-2011	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Holter Dam to Cascade						
2001	3.32	3.19	3.65	3.07	3.11	2.97
2005	2.96	2.87	3.14	2.82	2.96	2.54
2007	3.08	2.95	3.40	2.74	2.86	2.48
2009	3.14	2.90	3.69	2.66	2.73	2.51
2011	3.40	3.20	3.64	2.52	2.69	2.32
Cascade to Great Falls						
2001	2.45	2.38	2.83	2.06	1.95	2.65
2005	2.47	2.32	3.00	1.98	1.90	2.28
2007	2.56	2.66	2.00	1.96	1.88	2.38
2009	2.36	2.33	2.53	1.91	1.95	1.72
2011	2.75	2.53	3.25	1.74	1.67	1.89

Table 3-6.3 (cont'd): Average Angler Ratings for All Anglers, Resident Anglers, and Nonresident Anglers on Missouri River, March – February study years

	Average Satisfaction Rating All Anglers	Average Satisfaction Rating Residents	Average Satisfaction Rating Nonresidents	Average Crowding Rating All Anglers	Average Crowding Rating Residents	Average Crowding Rating Nonresidents
	Scale: 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)			Scale: 1 (not at all crowded) to 5 (very crowded)		
Missouri River Segment						
Great Falls to Fort Benton						
2001	2.40	2.37	2.70	1.90	1.89	2.00
2005	2.36	2.34	2.60	1.69	1.65	2.17
2007	2.82	2.81	2.86	1.55	1.54	1.57
2009	2.56	2.60	2.31	1.45	1.45	1.44
2011	2.41	2.33	2.77	1.32	1.36	1.15

Source: Most current available Angling Pressure Surveys, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, www.fwp.mt.gov.

Expenditures by Angling Groups

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks estimated resident and nonresident hunter and angler expenditures in Montana based on data collected from harvest surveys and the angler pressure survey. Total expenditures by anglers in the Missouri-Madison Corridor totaled roughly \$160 million in 2014, or about 17 percent of expenditures by anglers statewide (roughly \$908 million total) and account for about 13 percent of anglers in the state. The Missouri River from Holter Dam to Cascade and the Madison River between Hebgen Dam and Ennis Lake rank as the #1 and #3 highest segments for angling pressure statewide, respectively.

Recreation Use Summary

Montana hosts 5 million nonresident visitor groups and an estimated 8 million resident pleasure travel groups per year, totaling 13 million groups traveling within the state. The Missouri-Madison Corridor hosts roughly 1 million (8%) of those visitor groups at public and private recreation sites. Based on visitor characteristics and volume data, the Missouri-Madison Corridor hosts 8 percent of nonresident visitors to Montana and 5 percent of resident pleasure travelers. Given the popularity of outdoor recreation activities such as camping, day hiking, fishing, boating, and water sports, the Corridor meets the needs of many pleasure travelers in the state and also provides economic benefits that help support Montana businesses and families.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

This Plan retains and enhances the basic premises upon which it was originally built. Key concepts of the Plan are:

- To build on partnerships, collaboration, and resource-sharing as a means to extend funding and other resource needs to maintain, protect, and enhance recreation resources;
- Public and private agencies should continue the comprehensive approach to recreation planning in the Project Area that was established under the Plan;
- Mechanisms for monitoring recreation use (visitor surveys, manager surveys, use of the ROS/LAC system as a benchmark for monitoring change) need to remain current and effective.
- Maintaining recreation opportunities and resources at conditions that are appropriate for the groups that use them.

The Plan provides a framework to assist NorthWestern Energy, as Licensee of nine hydropower developments along the Missouri and Madison Rivers, in protecting and enhancing recreational opportunities in the Project Area. NorthWestern Energy, along with cooperating public land management agencies, will have shared responsibilities for recreation management within the Project Area until the License expires in 2040.

NorthWestern Energy has prepared this plan in partial fulfillment of its license responsibilities to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for operating its hydropower developments. This plan does not set public policy, but instead works within existing policies, plans and priorities of the various governmental entities that have jurisdiction regarding management of recreation resources and is subject to revision based on FERC comments or review.

The Project 2188 collaborative recreation process reached consensus on a long term cost share funding mechanism for recreation projects and continued management, operation and maintenance of recreation sites by existing public recreation managers – U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and local governments. All but two of the originally identified recreation projects have been completed to date.

The consensus of Project 2188 stakeholders was (and is) to maintain existing agency and local government authority and decision making over recreation management on rivers and reservoirs within the Madison-Missouri corridor and not to create a new system of public recreation management under the license. The licensee owns very few lands on which these recreation sites are located. Accordingly, the majority of recreation sites or services are owned or actively managed by recreation management agencies or local governments. NorthWestern Energy's role is to provide inflation-adjusted cost share funding to public land management agencies responsible for management of Project 2188 recreation sites. Site managers may use this funding, at their discretion, for ongoing site operations and maintenance to ensure recreation opportunities, services, and facilities meet the needs of the recreating public. NorthWestern Energy's cost share funding to these managers is adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers.

The MOU also provides a long term project consultation and funding mechanism by the establishment of the Missouri-Madison River Fund. The River Fund was established in 1999 and fully funded by the licensee and agencies by 2005. The River Fund Board of Directors is made up of one voting NorthWestern Energy representative, ten other voting representatives of the project area resource agency managers, county elected officials, and the general public, and a one non-voting representative from the Bureau of Reclamation. The River Fund Board oversees the implementation of the CRP and approves

recreation project funding based on annual funding availability. The River Fund Board is advised by involved agency recreation managers as they make recommendations based on annual Madison-Missouri River recreation manager surveys and visitor use counts and the six year visitor surveys and reports required under the Project 2188 License.

Through fiscal year 2017, 97 projects have been funded through the River Fund grant process with a total value of nearly \$7.5 million in recreation enhancements within the Missouri-Madison Corridor. Many of these recreation projects are well outside the Project 2188 FERC project boundary and support regional agency and river corridor recreation opportunities beyond the context of NorthWestern Energy's Project 2188 license or associated hydropower operations. This Missouri-Madison River Fund process has been guided by a continuing consensus-based process that originates within and through each of the three geographic regions in the Madison-Missouri Project Area. All recreation sites in the Project Area that are owned or managed by public agencies or local government are subject to public review/comment and public policy for their respective jurisdictions, including NEPA and MEPA compliance, among others, as applicable.

This Plan provides a process and criteria for new projects to be identified and prioritized on an annual basis. The process emphasizes locally identified projects, and involves the general public, recreating public, organizations, agencies, governmental entities, and the River Fund Board.

The overarching goal of the Plan is to continue the strong collaborative public-private partnerships to help address public recreation needs in the Project Area over the term of the License.