

ENHANCING MONTANA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION LEGACY



STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE
OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

2020-2024



Steve Bullock, Governor
STATE OF MONTANA



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by Andy Austin (andyaustinphoto.com)
and Montana State Parks – FWP.

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First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park.

Title page:
Giant Springs State Park

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*Developed by Montana State Parks
A Division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks*

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and appreciate the significant contributions by the SCORP Advisory Committee members who dedicated their time and expertise to assist in crafting the 2020-2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. In addition, we would like to acknowledge and thank the many recreation professionals across the state who attended the facilitated group discussions and provided helpful input and feedback and those who provided recreation success stories from their communities.

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Andy Austin (andy.austinphoto.com)

Pictograph Cave State Park

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

Steve Bullock
GOVERNOR



Mike Cooney
LT. GOVERNOR

December 3, 2019

It's no secret that Montana is an incredible place to live, work, play and raise a family. The quality of life that our state offers is second to none, with unparalleled access to world class recreational opportunities. Outdoor recreation also provides an enormous economic impact to our state that accounts for \$7.1 billion in consumer spending and supports over 71,000 jobs.

Outdoor recreation in Montana is more popular than ever. It's my pleasure to share with you Montana's 2020-2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) *Enhancing Montana's Outdoor Recreation Legacy*. The plan addresses how we, as a state, can protect and enhance the outdoor recreation assets that sustain our economy and our livelihoods and support opportunities for residents and visitors alike. It also outlines a strategy to ensure our outdoor recreation experiences remain resilient amid new risks and growing use and demand from future generations.

This SCORP effort was led by an Advisory Council that consisted of outdoor recreation stakeholders from across the state representing public and private sectors, local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, and advocacy organizations. The Advisory Council was instrumental in the facilitation of public meetings across the state to hear directly from Montanans about the pressing issues impacting the lands and opportunities they value most. Through this outreach and data gathering effort, the Advisory Council has established 6 actionable goals that will strengthen Montana's outdoor recreation future. I want to commend the Advisory Council, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation for their efforts to develop a comprehensive strategy that not only engaged Montanans throughout its development, but invites continued engagement and collaboration to deliver meaningful results.

We look forward to continuing to partner with stakeholders from across the state to use this plan as a way to further our shared values and contribute toward our goal of Enhancing Montana's Outdoor Recreation Legacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Bullock".

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

ENHANCING MONTANA'S OUTDOOR RECREATION LEGACY 2020–2024

Montanans value outdoor recreation, making it central to how we interact with the natural environment and with each other. Enhancing Montana's wild places while promoting our outdoor recreation legacy is central in the development of this Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Our state depends on outdoor recreation for physical and mental health, enhanced quality of life, community well-being, and economic vitality. The goals we have put forward in this plan take into account the diverse constituencies in Montana, while capitalizing on the existing resources our state has to offer.

Municipal recreation often serves as an access and pathway to other outdoor recreation opportunities in the state. As such, we want to explicitly acknowledge the integral role municipalities have in promoting and enhancing outdoor recreation in Montana. We are fortunate to live in a state where local parks and recreation agencies and local organizations promote and utilize Montana's extensive public lands for outdoor recreation programming. Even though only twenty nine percent of Montana's lands are publicly owned (Vincent et al., 2017), this still creates an amazing backdrop for a variety of outdoor recreation activities. In a recent survey of resident travel in Montana, scenic driving (35%), day hiking (19%), and watching wildlife (16%) were some of the top outdoor recreation related activities (ITRR).

We know that outdoor recreation is more than just activities, it is about experiences people have while engaging in activities in the natural environment (Moore & Driver 2005). This broad definition can include a hike through the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, skiing down the slopes at Discovery Ski Area, listening to an interpretive talk at Pictograph Cave State Park, or swimming at the outdoor Butte-Silver Bow Aquatic Center. A distinction we want to make is the difference between frontcountry and backcountry recreation. We define frontcountry as "areas that are easy to access by vehicle and predominantly visited by day users" (Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, 2016) and backcountry as mostly undeveloped places where more primitive recreation activities occur that rely on outdoor skills and your own equipment (United States Forest Service, 2016).

Enhancing Montana's outdoor recreation also means we continue to conserve our recreation lands appropriately. Montana currently has 3 Wild and Scenic Rivers, 16 designated Wilderness Areas, 10 National Forests, 9 National Parks, 55 State Parks, and numerous municipal and county parks and lands. It is important that we conserve this legacy while balancing the needs and demands of visitors.



As part of enhancing outdoor recreation we want to explicitly acknowledge the role of tourism. Resident travel—visiting 50 miles or more away from home—is a critical part of the Montana outdoor recreation industry bringing in \$2.87 billion in spending statewide (Grau et al., 2018). We recognize that non-resident travel is also contributing to the outdoor recreation economy. However, this SCORP focuses solely on the needs of Montanans as set forth by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act for the State Assistance Program.

Planning for outdoor recreation is complex given the mosaic of providers, interests, and land designations. Our hope is that this SCORP will reach a diversity of outdoor recreation providers and be used as the guiding outdoor recreation document that helps set priorities in the state and as a tool for how to best manage for our recreation experiences.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

There are several features of this SCORP that we want to highlight to help you use the document more efficiently.

1. We have developed a chapter to correspond with each goal. This is to help you navigate the document and find the information that is most relevant you.

2. Look for the   icons for quick facts and resources to help with your outdoor recreation planning needs.

3. Each chapter has vignettes of communities, organizations, and programs that are making a difference in Montana in outdoor recreation. We recognize we may have missed something exceptional happening in the state. We want to encourage you to share your story even if it did not make this round of SCORP.

4. In an effort to make this plan efficient and easy to read, we moved some material to the appendix, including current maps of public and tribal lands and findings from our facilitated group discussions.

What is SCORP?

A Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is required of every state to be eligible for the Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) Program. Since 1965, Montana has received over \$38 million in LWCF state-side appropriations to enhance and sustain outdoor recreation resources in the state. LWCF has two parts, the “state-side” which funds state and local projects, and the “federal-side” which funds federal land purchases. The goals for the LWCF State Assistance Program are:

- a. Meet state and locally identified public outdoor recreation resource needs to strengthen the health and vitality of the American people.
- b. Increase the number of protected state and local outdoor recreation resources and to ensure their availability for public use in perpetuity.
- c. Encourage sound planning and long-term partnerships to expand the quantity and to ensure the quality of needed state and local outdoor recreation resources.

Montana State Parks administers only the “state-side”—state and local portion of LWCF (for more information about the specifics of SCORP and LWCF please visit <http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/lwcf.html>). Montana State Parks holds the authority to represent and act for the state to work with the Department of Interior for the LWCF Act.

This newest version of SCORP “Enhancing Montana’s Outdoor Recreation Legacy 2020–2024” has been a collaboration between Montana State Parks and the University of Montana in an effort to develop a concise and easily digestible plan. As such, this plan builds on the existing resources in the state including Montana’s previous SCORP effort. Our goal with this plan is to not overwhelm readers with data and findings, but to provide goals and recommendations while highlighting some of Montana’s amazing outdoor recreation legacy.



Chief Plenty Coups State Park

Andy Austin (andyaustrinphoto.com)

Who is Eligible for State-side LWCF funds?

There are several state entities that are eligible for LWCF state-side funds, they include incorporated cities, towns, counties, school districts, state agencies, and tribal governments. We want to highlight that all tribal entities in Montana are eligible to apply for these funds. If you have questions about eligibility please reach out to Montana State Parks: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/lwcf.html>.

Utility of SCORP

This plan acts as a resource for outdoor recreation providers and organizations. The goals and recommendations should guide future planning efforts, assist with grant applications, and be a unifying vision of outdoor recreation for the state. Specifically, applications for LWCF state-side grants should use language from this document when applying for funding. We recommend highlighting how individual projects align with the SCORP goals and recommendations. These plans are produced by all 50 states and are recognized by local, state, and federal agencies as being the primary guiding documents for outdoor recreation. This means this SCORP document can be used as justification in grant applications, future planning efforts, and can assist organizations in justifying resources. The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals (SORP) (<https://www.recpro.org/>) is a resource for organizations who want to know how to utilize SCORP for planning, management, and research. Additionally, SORP has an electronic database of all 50 states' SCORP reports.

Planning Process

This plan is possible because of the hard work and dedication of our SCORP Advisory Committee (see pg. II). The Advisory Committee was comprised of outdoor recreation representatives from public and private sectors, local, state, and federal agencies, and advocacy organizations. With the guidance from the Advisory Committee we developed a planning process that met the intent of SCORP. The approach was to utilize facilitated group discussions to gather input from the outdoor recreation community and pair that with existing data sets to develop a robust set of goals and recommendations.

The primary data collection effort took place during three facilitated discussion groups held in March of 2019 in Kalispell, Butte, and Billings. Over 300 outdoor recreation related people were invited to attend our meetings to share ideas about trends, needs, and goals for the next five years (Appendix A). We then paired the major themes from the discussions with existing data on recreation trends in Montana (Appendix C). This provided a foundation for our SCORP Advisory Committee to develop goals and recommendations.

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2020–2024 SCORP Goals



GOAL 1: Promote Outdoor Recreation Opportunities for All Montanans



GOAL 2: Enhance Public Access to Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities



GOAL 3: Support Economic Vitality of Communities and State



GOAL 4: Improve Quality of Life through Outdoor Recreation Experiences



GOAL 5: Adapt Outdoor Recreation for a Changing Environment



GOAL 6: Honor Montana's Outdoor Legacy





The Big Paddle at Frenchtown Pond

Montana State Parks – FWP

Note from the Director of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

In Montana, the outdoors is our lifestyle. It's why we love it here. It's one reason people move here. Our shared love of the outdoors pervades our culture and drives our economy.

But with growing population centers and interest in outdoor recreation comes the need for better recreation management to make sure we protect the integrity of the outdoor experience. That is why every five years we revisit our Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan – Montana's guiding document for outdoor recreation management.

This document is not just a product of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; it is the result of an abundance of work by partner agencies and organizations – local, state and federal. It also reflects public input from community members around the state. The goal was to produce a plan that reflects the way Montanans see recreation and the needs they identified.

This process has reaffirmed that our agency mantra is alive and well: "The Outside is in us all!"

We also heard loudly and clearly that Montanans share some core values when it comes to recreation. You want to see outdoor recreation opportunities for all Montanans, no matter where they live or their economic status.

You also are concerned with access to outdoor recreation resources, facilities and public lands. You understand that this access is critical to the economic vitality of our local communities.

You also clearly see, as I do, the tie between the importance of access for outdoor recreation opportunities and your quality of life. This is not just a matter of having a place to hunt and fish, but it is also about sharing these traditions with your family. It's about having a place to find solace and respite amid a busy life. It's about finding time in the outdoors to be healthy, joyful and to feed your soul.

You also recognize that things are changing and amidst this change, our outdoor recreation management needs to keep up. This is particularly true when it comes to resource impacts and climate change, which is affecting us more and more each year.

And finally, we heard loudly and clearly that Montana has a deep outdoor legacy that we need to respect and honor. This includes acknowledging traditional uses like hunting and fishing, as well as newer pursuits like rock climbing and mountain biking.

I believe this document meets these challenges and gives us a good path for the next five years.

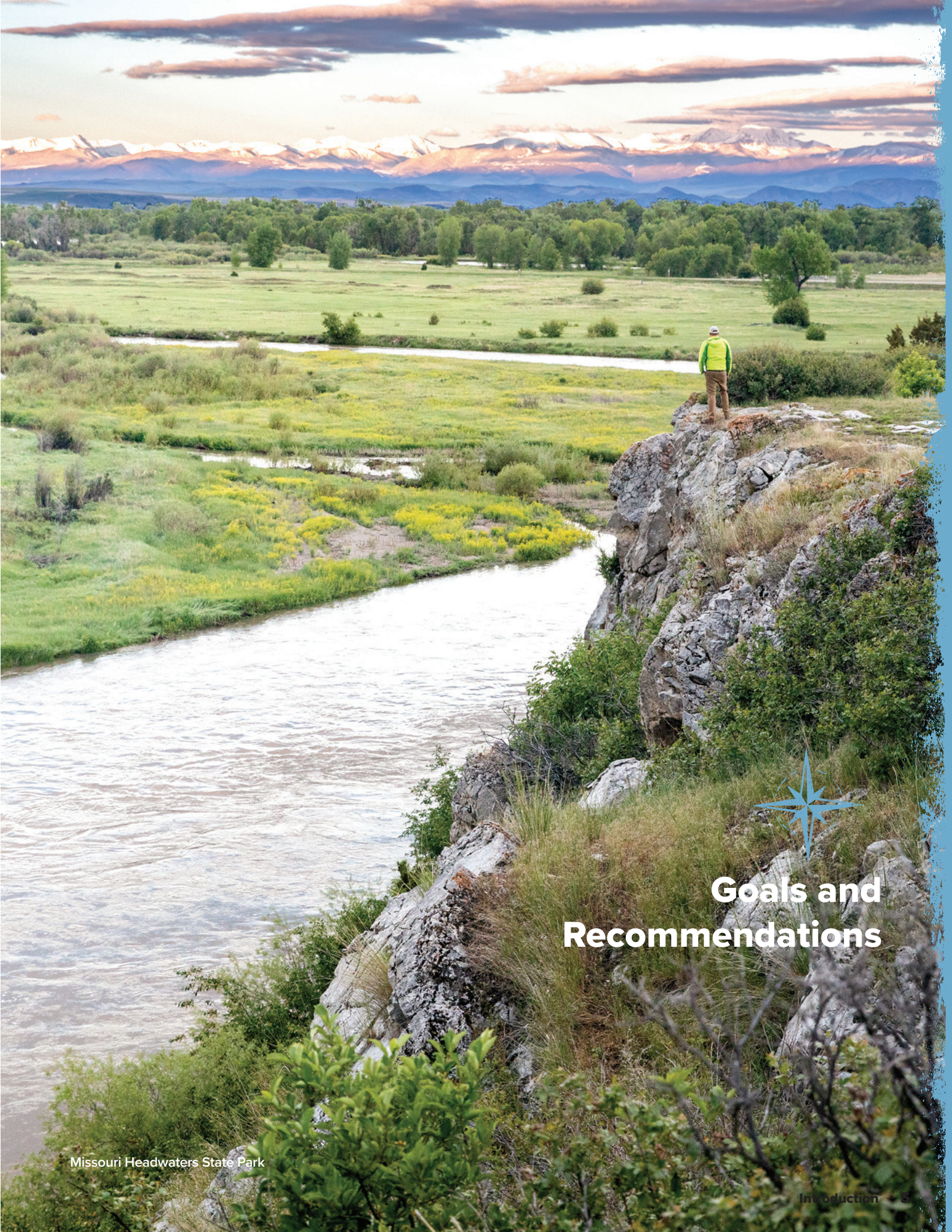
I encourage you to read this document and make sure we and others follow it in the coming years. If we tackle this together, imagine what we accomplish.



Martha Williams

Martha Williams

Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks



Goals and Recommendations

Goals and Recommendations

There is overwhelming support across Montana to continue to enhance our outdoor recreation legacy. As such, we believe our goals and recommendations adhere to this guiding principle and provide thoughtful recommendations that can help us achieve this overarching objective. These goals and recommendations are further discussed in the subsequent chapters. To further illuminate our goals and recommendations we have provided vignettes and stories of outdoor recreation all-stars in Montana. Our hope is that these stories, along with the goals and recommendations, inspire us all to sustain the outstanding outdoor recreation Montana has to offer.



Image courtesy of Whitefish Legacy Partners

GOAL 1:

Promote Outdoor Recreation Opportunities for All Montanans

Recommendation: Support outdoor recreation participation for underserved, disadvantaged, and persons with disabilities

- ◆ Promote a statewide effort to inventory outdoor recreation opportunities that meet ADA accessibility standards
- ◆ Support education for recreation providers that encourages the use of access-based standards
- ◆ Partner with outdoor recreation providers to promote accessible outdoor recreation sites

Recommendation: Provide outdoor recreation education for all

- ◆ Promote the integration of outdoor recreation and natural education in school curriculum
- ◆ Advocate for public/private partnerships to enhance education on stewardship, land ethic, Leave No Trace principles, and outdoor recreation-related skills



Image by Diana Proemr.



GOAL 2:

Enhance Public Access to Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities

Recommendation: Support data collection efforts that address visitor management challenges and opportunities

- ◆ Take steps towards the creation of a central recreation asset map system that displays recreation opportunities across the state
- ◆ Develop interagency collaborative data collection effort to gauge statewide and regional outdoor recreation related visitor use

Recommendation: Collaborate across boundaries on public, tribal, and private lands and water access issues

- ◆ Assist in the establishment of long-term funding for an Access Coordinator that works across jurisdictional boundaries
- ◆ Utilize existing datasets to identify “locked” public land and develop cross-jurisdictional strategies to find solutions

Recommendation: Improve and expand frontcountry outdoor recreation opportunities

- ◆ Improve community-to-community outdoor recreation connectivity through the use of multi-scale planning and multi-modal transportation infrastructure
- ◆ Promote funding opportunities to develop, improve, and maintain frontcountry outdoor recreation



GOAL 3:

Support Economic Vitality of Communities and State

Recommendation: Continued investment in the outdoor recreation industry and economy

- ◆ Support and expand the efforts of the Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation
- ◆ Promote data collection efforts focused on the outdoor recreation economy
- ◆ Expand workforce training and education for outdoor recreation industry

Recommendation: Diversify funding sources for outdoor recreation opportunities in and around communities

- ◆ Support the development of a “one stop shop” for outdoor recreation related grants
- ◆ Develop a communication strategy to inform the diversity of outdoor recreation entities about LWCF funding opportunities

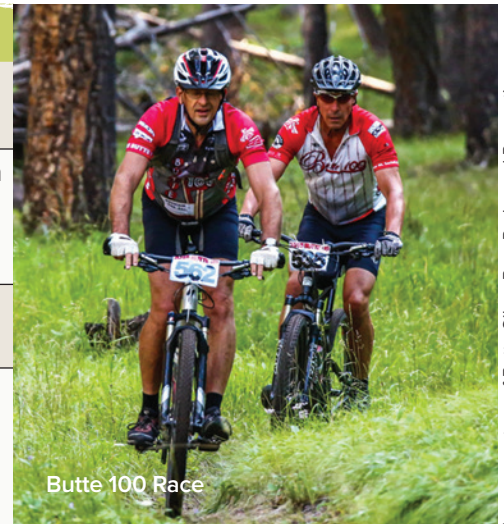


Image courtesy of Butte-Silver-Bow Parks and Recreation



GOAL 4:

Improve Quality of Life through Outdoor Recreation Experiences

Recommendation: Engage senior, youth, and health-challenged populations in healthy outdoor recreation

- ◆ Promote physical exercise and outdoor recreation opportunities directly to seniors
- ◆ Coordinate outdoor recreation efforts with partners already working with senior and health-challenged populations
- ◆ Partner with education providers to develop an outdoor recreation curriculum for youth

Recommendation: Promote the health benefits of outdoor recreation

- ◆ Collaborate with healthcare industry to develop effective outdoor programming and facilities
- ◆ Partner with businesses to support and connect workplace health promotion programs to outdoor recreation opportunities



GOAL 5:

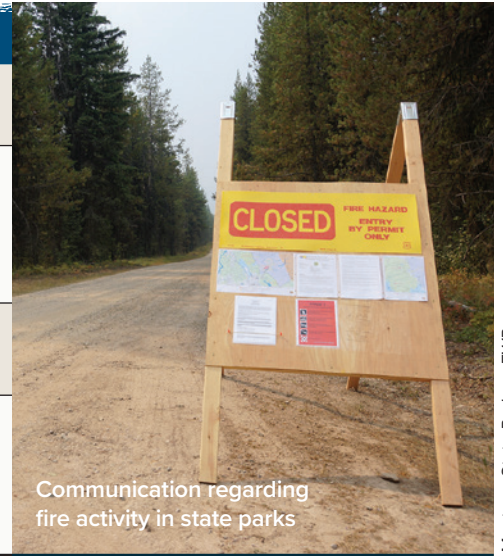
Adapt Outdoor Recreation for a Changing Environment

Recommendation: Integrate with current natural hazard preparedness and response efforts

- ◆ Promote coordination and communication between outdoor recreation managers and emergency management and first responders
- ◆ Encourage outdoor recreation organizations to develop natural hazard emergency response plans

Recommendation: Integrate outdoor recreation planning with land use and community planning efforts

- ◆ Promote sustainable building and development for outdoor recreation infrastructure (green building, LEED, etc.), especially in urban interface areas
- ◆ Encourage outdoor recreation-specific climate projections and information for the outdoor recreation industry



Communication regarding fire activity in state parks

Montana State Parks – FWP



GOAL 6:

Honor Montana's Outdoor Legacy

Recommendation: Conserve Montana's outdoor and natural resources

- ◆ Balance outdoor recreation use with ecological function of natural resources including fish, wildlife, and their habitats
- ◆ Integrate social and ecological goals in outdoor recreation planning efforts

Recommendation: Strengthen connection with tribes through outdoor recreation

- ◆ Integrate tribal voices in outdoor recreation planning efforts
- ◆ Develop collaborative strategy with tribal members and affiliations for managing, interpreting, and sharing the value of Montana's critical heritages, cultures, and historic sites
- ◆ Promote LWCF funding opportunities for outdoor recreation to tribes

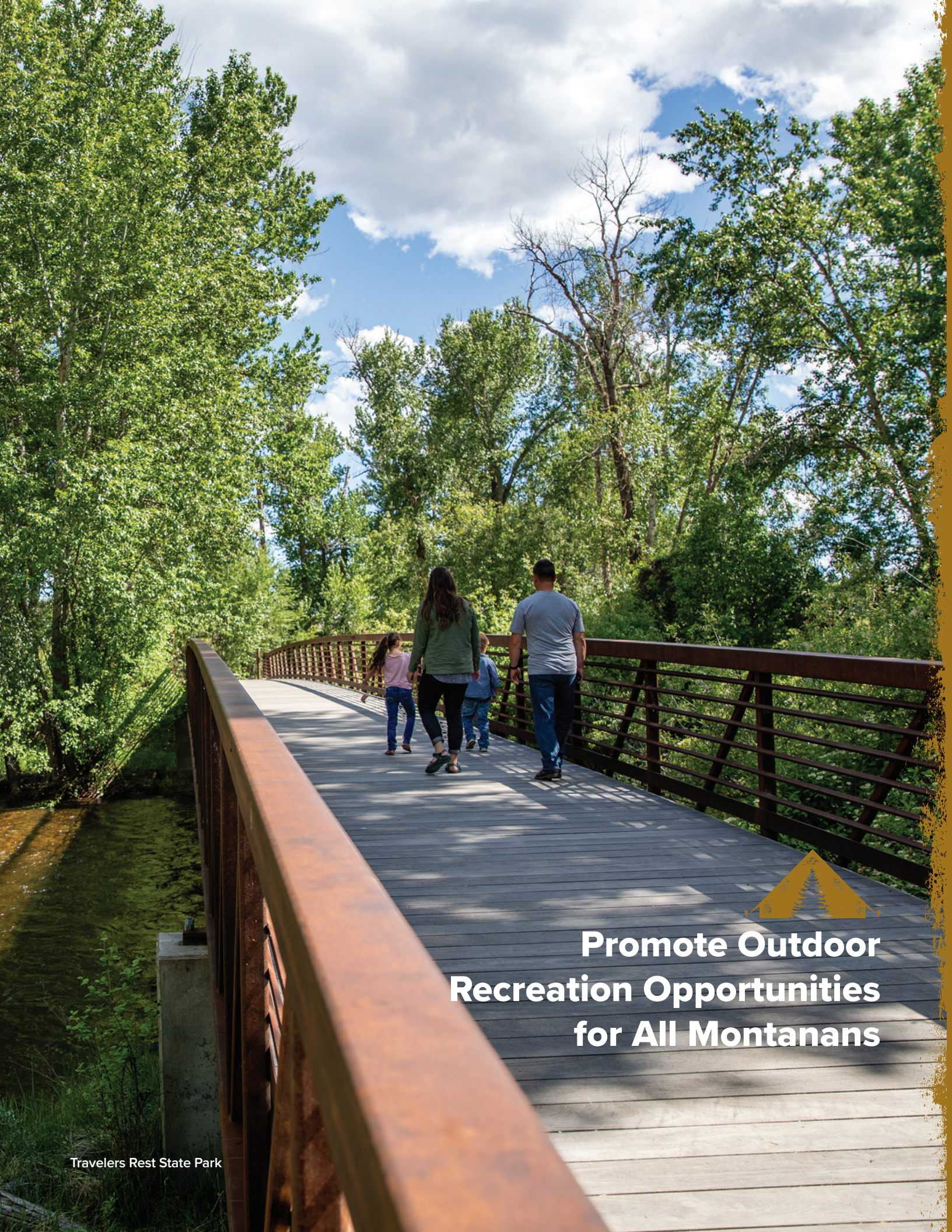
Recommendation: Protect and preserve historic sites and heritage resources

- ◆ Continued support for preservation of historical sites and resources including tribal lands, battlefields, cultural sites, etc.
- ◆ Encourage continued education and interpretation of Montana's heritage resources



Travelers Rest State Park

Andy Austin (andycaustphoto.com)



**Promote Outdoor
Recreation Opportunities
for All Montanans**



Outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences should be available to all Montanans. The outdoor

recreation community actively works at providing opportunities that meet the needs of all; however, continued support and development is still necessary. Currently, 13% of Montanans have a disability, with the most common disability being ambulatory (Erickson & von Schrader, 2016). To increase persons with disabilities' participation in outdoor recreation, a statewide inventory of outdoor recreation opportunities is needed. There is a need for a more holistic understanding of what opportunities



DID YOU KNOW?

The U.S. Forest Service has been a leader in creating accessible opportunities for recreation through universal design. They offer an online accessibility guidebook that your outdoor recreation organization can use as a reference: <https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/>

exist and what opportunities are needed. Part of this effort should also include an understanding of the outdoor recreation facilities that utilize universal design and/or are Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act accessible. This could be in the form of a consolidated inventory of assets at all jurisdictional levels across the state (e.g. state, county, local). This inventory could be integrated as a GIS map layer to make these sites and facilities known and available to all.

Asset mapping of ADA accessible facilities is just one step in the process. Communicating what Montana has to offer is also needed. This can take



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Recommendation: Provide outdoor recreation education for all

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the form of capitalizing on an existing organization like MonTECH (<http://recreation.ruralinstitute.umd.edu/mt/>), devoted to increasing outdoor recreation participation for people with disabilities. State level organizations like Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks can also be a partner in communicating with residents by making sure their ADA resources page is known across the state (<http://fwp.mt.gov/recreation/ctb/links.html>).

Providing outdoor recreation for all Montanans also means engaging in education. Most notable is connecting children to nature through education. Research demonstrates that regular exposure to nature and outdoor learning greatly improves social well-being and contributes to children's behavioral, cognitive, and emotional development (Norwood et al., 2019; Bolling et al. 2019). Therefore, it is imperative that the outdoor recreation community advocates for the integration of outdoor play and connection to nature in the classroom. This can be formal through the development

of outdoor recreation curriculum or informal like unstructured outdoor playtime. Collaborations should be developed between outdoor recreation organizations and the Montana Department of Public Instruction, Department of Public Health and Human Services, other state agencies, and health care partners. In addition to youth, we should also consider how we educate the broader outdoor recreation users in Montana. Public/private partnerships should be established and can be helpful in educating Montanans about stewardship, sustainable recreation practices, land ethic, and outdoor recreation-related skills. Integration of outdoor education in school curriculum and adult recreation programming (Adopt-A-Fish w/ FWP, Trout in the Classroom w/ Trout Unlimited, Project WET, Project WILD, Leaf Pack Network, Hooked on Fishing Program, National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), and Leave No Trace).

Lastly, we want to explicitly mention that maintaining existing outdoor recreation facilities and infrastructure is a critical aspect of supporting opportunities for Montanans. Municipal, county, tribal, and state outdoor recreation providers



27% of the people living in the United States had a disability in 2014. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention reports that more than **one in four Montana adults** experience disability.

have deferred maintenance and improvements that should be prioritized in the state. For example, many communities have swimming pools and splash or spraygrounds that need to be updated to keep people safe and healthy. While this is not as glamorous as building a new park or trail, it is much needed and can greatly enhance outdoor recreation experiences for all.



DID YOU KNOW?

Visit the U.S. Access Board to find the most up-to-date standards for ADA and ABA. This includes information on shared-use paths, outdoor developed areas, and recreation facilities: <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities>

The Children & Nature Network is a great resource to learn about the benefit of natural spaces for children in your community. They offer assistance to municipal leaders across the U.S. in partnership with National League of Cities to create improved nature access for low-income communities: <https://www.childrenandnature.org/>



Information and image courtesy of Whitefish Legacy Partners

Whitefish Legacy Trails: In 2015, the City of Whitefish, Trust for Public Land, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co., along with community partners, secured a 3,022-acre conservation easement in Haskill Basin, east of Whitefish Lake for wildlife habitat, drinking water protection, and public recreation. Trail easements were secured on the protected F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. as well as adjacent City of Whitefish, Iron Horse, and Whitefish Mountain Resort properties to establish two trailheads connected by 5.5 miles of trail. In 2016, the City of Whitefish and Whitefish Legacy partners received an LWCF grant to support the construction of two new trailheads, a bridge, and a boardwalk as part of the new 5.5-mile trail. In addition to the LWCF grant, other grants were secured along with community fundraising efforts to fully fund the project. The trails along with the bridge and boardwalk were completed and opened for public use in 2018. The project added new trail access 2.3 miles from the center of downtown, connecting the community with the protected lands in Haskill Basin. The year-round, multi-use destinations include an ADA accessible interpretive loop trail and picnic area at Reservoir Trailhead and new winter access for Nordic skiing at the Big Mountain Trailhead.



Information and image courtesy of Butte-Silver Bow Parks & Recreation

Butte Ridge Waters: From 2005–2017, the community of Butte-Silver Bow did not have a public outdoor swimming pool. That changed on June 26, 2018 with the opening of Ridge Waters water park! This water park was brought to life by generous donations, the passing of a bond, support from the Butte community and an LWCF grant of \$150,000. Ridge Waters has become a summer hot spot for the Butte community, and surrounding communities with amenities including a lazy river, diving board, facilities for both water basketball and water volleyball, climbing wall, slides, and play structure. In fact, the water park attracted over 35,000 visitors in the shortened 2018 season! In addition, Butte Ridge Waters has a zero-clearance entry making the pool accessible for people of all abilities. Adjacent to the pool is an all-abilities playground as well.



Billings Parks and Recreation: Billings Parks and Recreation has utilized several forms of funding to complete new projects or replace and refurbish existing facilities. One primary form of funding comes from Park District 1. Park District 1 was created in 2012 to assist Billings Parks and Recreation annually with \$1.3 million in funding for deferred maintenance and life-cycle replacement of park amenities that would have otherwise been removed or closed. In addition, Park District 1 provides \$700,000 annually for improved park maintenance and operations. Utilization of this funding stream along with LWCF funding has allowed for the completion of many major projects, including the installation of a Sprayground in place of an old wading pool, tennis court resurfacing, new inclusive playground equipment, and other new facilities.

Billings Parks and Recreation Adventure Camp: Billings Parks and Recreation’s Adventure Camp strives to keep 9–13 year olds moving, learning, and exploring through various outdoor recreation activities. This all-day camp features a specific theme each week and campers are given the opportunity to engage in a wide variety of activities ranging from whitewater rafting and paddle boarding to hiking and overnight camping.



17% of children (under 18 years of age) in the U.S. had a disability in 2014. About **3% of school aged children** had a condition that limited their ability to walk, run, or take part in sports or games.

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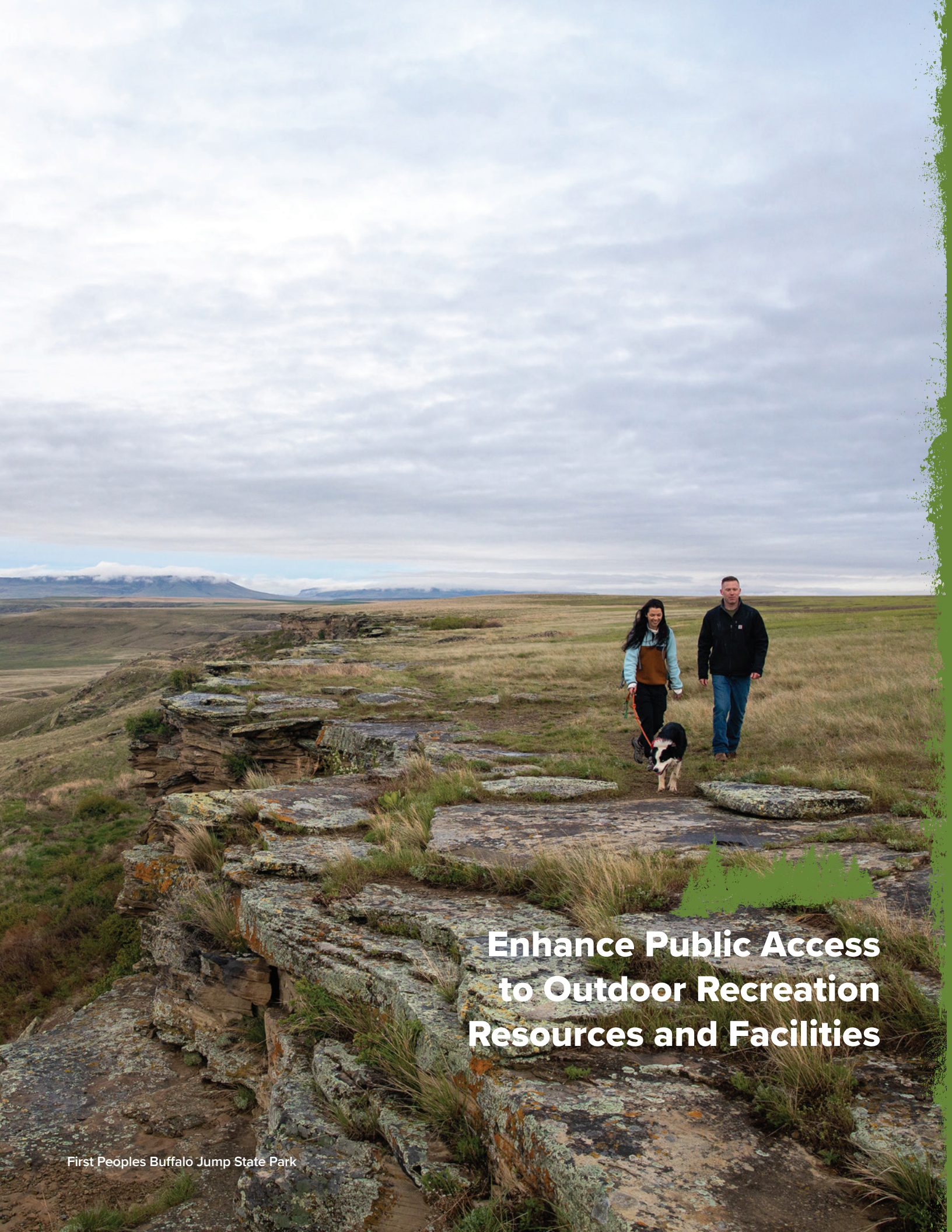
DID YOU KNOW?

The Rural Institute at the University of Montana offers education, training, and research on how to connect and improve the lives of people living with disabilities. Visit their website to see how they might become a partner with your organization: <http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/>

The National Parks Service’s “Every Kid in a Park” program waives park entrance fees for 4th graders and their families: <https://www.nationalparks.org/our-work/campaigns-initiatives/every-kid-park>

Bozeman’s Montana Outdoor Science School (MOSS) provides educational opportunities for kids to explore the outdoors and understand the relationship between science and nature: <http://www.outdoorscience.org/>

Missoula YWCA’s GUTS (Girls Using Their Strengths) program empowers young girls to discover and utilize their strengths through community service projects, after-school groups, and summer wilderness adventures: <https://ywcaofmissoula.org/services/girls-empowerment-guts/>



Enhance Public Access to Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities



Access to public lands, outdoor recreation resources, and facilities is a hallmark of Montana’s outdoor recreation legacy. Access can mean different things to different people and therefore requires a level of specificity when using the term. For example, in Montana, 3.08 million acres of state and federal lands are landlocked by private lands which prevents legal access for outdoor recreation (Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership). Access



DID YOU KNOW?

The Trust for Public Land provides a free mapping system displaying parks within communities across the country. This tool can visually display the need for parks in certain areas, the percentage of city land set aside for parks, and how many residents live within 10 minutes of a park: <https://www.tpl.org/>

Tree Search is a free searchable database from the United States Forest Service that allows users to access roughly 52,500 full-text articles related to ecology, environment, wildlife, natural resource management, fire, forest health, climate change, forest products, and people: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/>

can also mean that a community may not have adequate frontcountry opportunities like trails to get outside on a daily basis. Alternatively, access can be related to out-of-date or inadequately maintained facilities and infrastructure. Across our facilitated group discussions we heard from outdoor recreation leaders that they wanted to enhance and promote access to opportunities. This ranged from connectivity between trails, access to landlocked public lands, and a more comprehensive understanding of outdoor recreation facilities and



GOAL 2:

Enhance Public Access to Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities

Recommendation: Support data collection efforts that address visitor management challenges and opportunities

- ◆ Take steps towards the creation of a central recreation asset map system that displays recreation opportunities across the state
- ◆ Develop interagency collaborative data collection effort to gauge statewide and regional outdoor recreation related visitor use

Recommendation: Collaborate across boundaries on public, tribal, and private lands and water access issues

- ◆ Assist in the establishment of long-term funding for an Access Coordinator that works across jurisdictional boundaries
- ◆ Utilize existing datasets to identify “locked” public land and develop cross-jurisdictional strategies to find solutions

Recommendation: Improve and expand frontcountry outdoor recreation opportunities

- ◆ Improve community-to-community outdoor recreation connectivity through the use of multi-scale planning and multi-modal transportation infrastructure
- ◆ Promote funding opportunities to develop, improve, and maintain frontcountry outdoor recreation

resources in the form of online and interactive maps.

In an effort to develop public information tools to better illustrate public access areas, a central outdoor recreation asset, multi-layer map system is needed. This would allow for greater transparency in regards to what recreation opportunities are available and where. Ideally, this multi-layer system would display maps from all participating agencies including FWP, BLM, USFS, and include county and city-level data as well. Along with asset mapping, a long-term visitor use monitoring program should be considered. This can be as simple as using existing data collection efforts and learning about how they interface with state and community level planning. A more complex approach might be an interagency collaborative data collection effort. A comprehensive visitor monitoring plan would allow for an inventory of sites and activities statewide and could assist in efforts to alleviate pressure from high-use

areas during peak seasons. As part of this effort, organizations can also map maintenance issues with facilities and infrastructure. This would allow managers and providers to track outdoor recreation resources over time.

Montanans deeply value access to public lands and state waterways. Access is a point of pride and many residents would like to have more of a voice in the decision-making process regarding their public lands (Grau & Schultz, 2018). A variety of outdoor recreation interest groups have led the effort to promote a public dialogue around access to public lands. Hunters, anglers, mountain bikers, rock climbers, and snowmobilers, to name a few, have all vocalized the need for access to public lands. Montana took a step in a positive direction by promoting the need for a Public Access Coordinator position. As part of this document we want to echo the need for continued support for this critical role in the state. The person in a position like this can work

collaboratively with communities and residents on access challenges, help secure public access, and promote existing access programs like the FWP block management program. To further assist with access, the outdoor recreation community should promote and support datasets that identify “locked” public land and to develop cross-jurisdictional strategies to find solutions including public/private agreements and easements.

While we want to encourage access to recreation lands it is also important to mention property rights and working lands that may or may not allow access for recreation. The outdoor recreation community should continue to respect decisions and rights of private landowners but work toward meaningful approaches to learn about how to promote access on private lands. We want to especially highlight

the need for hunters to connect with landowners before accessing private lands. For more information, visit: <http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/hunterAccess/>.

While Montana has vast backcountry recreation opportunities, frontcountry outdoor recreation opportunities should be improved and expanded. This includes non-wilderness federal lands and other landownerships in close proximity to urban centers. Planning efforts are needed to help communities work through the challenges associated with frontcountry experiences. Developing a frontcountry outdoor recreation plan can be daunting given uncertainty with landownership, risk and liability, and long-term funding. Therefore,

efforts should be made to simplify outdoor recreation planning so even the smallest community can feel empowered to make their own outdoor recreation plan. There is a need for a “one stop shop” for community and outdoor recreation leaders to find grants, resources, and a network of people in the state who are working through similar challenges. In these community planning efforts, more consideration should be made for accurately mapping front-to-backcountry outdoor recreation connectivity and overall trail connectivity within and around communities. Additionally, increased funding for outdoor recreation facility maintenance (trail maintenance and improvements) should be considered.



According to an FWP survey issued in 2019 examining elk hunting access in Montana, **83% of respondents**, all license holders, reported they hunted elk on publicly-owned land. Additionally, the average number of years respondents reported hunting elk in Montana was **23 years**.



DID YOU KNOW?

The United States Forest Service’s National Visitor Use Monitoring Program provides data on recreational visitation to National Forests and explores the details of that visitation including activity participation, duration of visit, satisfaction, demographics and more: <https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/>

Montana Trails Recreation Park Association (MTRPA) is comprised of recreation professional from across the state. Members work collaboratively to improve recreation opportunities for all Montanans and in turn improve our quality of life: <https://www.mtrpa.info/>

OnX Maps provides statewide coverage maps differentiating public and private land boundaries. This allows hunters to identify public access points and property lines to ensure that their access remains legal and ethical: <https://www.onxmaps.com/>



Information and image courtesy of Montana DNRC

Public Access Coordinator: In 2016, Montana Governor Steve Bullock created a public access specialist position within the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. This specialist position was created to identify and pursue key opportunities to increase public access to state trust lands, public lands, and public waters in Montana, prioritizing high-value projects and bringing together private landowners, state, and federal land managers cooperatively to do so. With the establishment of this type of position, it can allow for the coordination and cooperation across multiple jurisdictions of state and public lands. In addition, partnerships can be established and strengthened between landowners, land trusts, working groups, outdoor recreation industries, and outdoor recreationists and sportsmen.



Information courtesy of Gallatin Valley Land Trust. Image by Diana Proemm.

Bozeman’s Main Street to the Mountains Trail System: Spearheaded by Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLТ), the Main Street to the Mountains trail system displays the power of a collective community vision, public/private partnerships, and collaboration. As a cross-jurisdictional project, many partners have worked together to expand and increase this trail system’s connectivity segment by segment. Now over 80 miles in length, this trail system allows the community access from the core of Bozeman to the foothills of the mountains both north and south. In addition, the in-town trails allow for increased connectivity between neighborhoods, recreation centers, schools, and more. The Main Street to the Mountains system has provided a space for residents and non-residents to recreate, be healthy, and connect with each other and the landscape.

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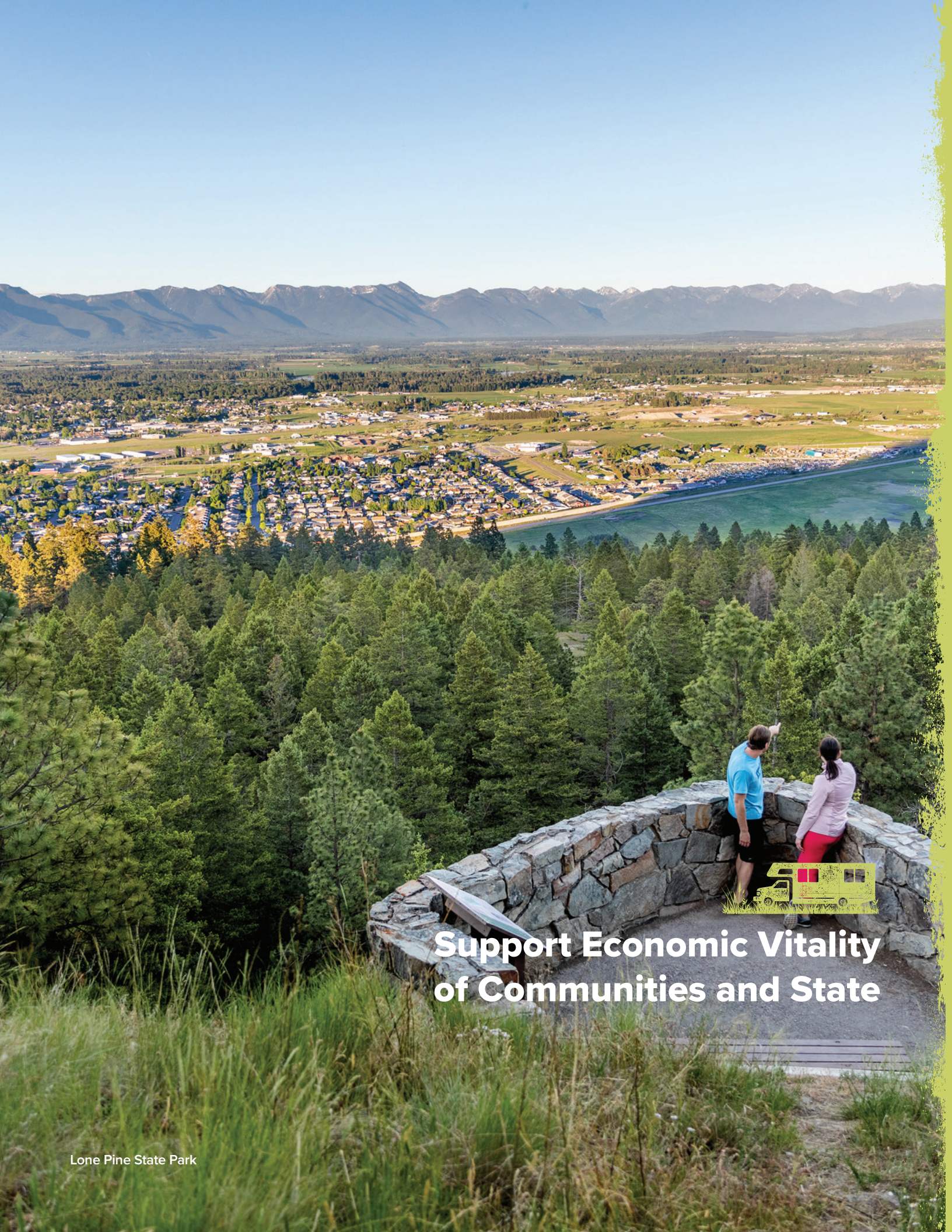
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 **DID YOU KNOW?**

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation partners with landowners, federal and state agencies, and other conservation organizations to secure or improve public access to elk habitat that can be enjoyed by hunters, hikers, anglers, and more: <http://www.rmef.org/Conservation/PublicAccess.aspx>

The 11.8-mile Headwaters Trail System in Three Forks serves as a designated gateway trail for the Great American Rail-Trail! More details can be found at: <http://www.railstotrails.org/greatamericanrailtrail/route/montana/>



Support Economic Vitality of Communities and State





Outdoor recreation plays an integral role in Montana's economy, generating \$7.1 billion in consumer spending (Outdoor Industry Association). Recent Bureau of Economic Analysis data indicates that 5.1% of Montana's Gross Domestic Product comes from outdoor recreation; which has created more than 28,000 jobs (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2019). Montanans believe the outdoor recreation economy is important to the economic future of the state (Headwaters). Montana's wealth of public lands and water resources create the ideal backdrop for communities and the state to develop a thriving economy around outdoor recreation. For example, deer, elk, and antelope hunters spent an estimated \$324 million in Montana (Montana FWP, 2016). Montana boasts year round attractions and activities that contribute to the health and well-being of people and their communities.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Outdoor Industry Association provides state level economic data on outdoor recreation, information about current trends, and tools and trainings to help your organization succeed: <https://outdoorindustry.org/>

A success story from the last SCORP was the creation of the Office of Outdoor Recreation (OOR). Since instituting this office there has been more connection between outdoor recreation organizations, including partnerships between private, public, and non-profit entities to help solve critical planning and management challenges. To continue the momentum of the OOR, additional funding and staffing should be considered to continue support for the outdoor recreation economy in Montana. To continue the success



GOAL 3:

Support Economic Vitality of Communities and State

Recommendation: Continued investment in the outdoor recreation industry and economy

- ◆ Support and expand the efforts of the Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation
- ◆ Promote data collection efforts focused on the outdoor recreation economy
- ◆ Expand workforce training and education for outdoor recreation industry

Recommendation: Diversify funding sources for outdoor recreation opportunities in and around communities

- ◆ Support the development of a "one stop shop" for outdoor recreation-related grants
- ◆ Develop a communication strategy to inform the diversity of outdoor recreation entities about LWCF funding opportunities



Residents of Montana spend **\$3.61 billion** on outdoor recreation in the state each year!

of OOR, efforts should be made to collect relevant economic data in partnership between local, tribal, state, and federal entities focused on outdoor recreation. This data will be critical in assisting outdoor recreation planning efforts. Collaboration efforts should be made with entities such as the Montana Department of Education and the Montana Department of Labor & Industry to expand technical workforce training and education for jobs in the outdoors. Utilization and promotion of workforce training programs and volunteer programs such as Montana Conservation Corps and Americorps should continue and improve as well. Continued connection with the Montana University System is encouraged, specifically the University of Montana Parks, Tourism & Recreation Program and Montana State University Billings Outdoor Adventure Leadership Program that prepares students for careers in recreation and also help connect workforce training and jobs.

Since outdoor recreation is big business in Montana, it will be

imperative to promote and market outdoor recreation to residents and beyond. To do so, outdoor recreation events should be amplified across the state to attract both residents and visitors. The creation of a coordinated recreation event calendar could assist in increasing awareness about these events. Montana should continue to hold outdoor recreation summits to forge and strengthen lasting partnerships between public and private entities. Lastly, partnerships between private, state, tribal, and federal entities should be created and enhanced to identify and capitalize on shared opportunities to promote outdoor recreation in Montana.

Across the facilitated group discussions, participants identified that it was challenging to find grant opportunities for their outdoor recreation-related needs. Establishing a "one stop shop" for outdoor recreation-related grants would allow for greater transparency and utilization of funding available for outdoor recreation projects. For example, beginning in January 2020, a new funding source for a local community grant program benefiting outdoor recreation in Montana will begin. When Montana residents register their light vehicles annually, in addition to their



Montana's outdoor recreation economy generates **\$7.1 billion** in consumer spending annually and more than **71,000 jobs!**


decision to support Montana State Parks, a portion of the \$9 voluntary amount will be earmarked for the new grant program. Per vehicle registration, \$1.37 will go toward the new program. Programs like this will supplement existing grant programs currently available and managed by Montana FWP (e.g. LWCF and Recreational Trails Program (RTP), Snowmobile and OHV Programs). Montana State Parks will continue to promote these funding opportunities across the state and encourage a diversity of applications. Montana is fortunate to offer a variety of grant programs and the collective outdoor recreation community should continue to encourage legislative action to authorize LWCF and other monies in the future.



Information and images courtesy of Seeley Swan Pathfinder



Seeley Lake Winterfest: Winterfest is an event that highlights Seeley Lake and brings surrounding communities together to enjoy the many winter opportunities available in the Seeley Lake area. Winterfest began in 1991 and encapsulated the spirit and sport of prior events centered around winter sports held in Seeley Lake including “Snowmobilavous” and “Yamafest.” These events evolved into Winterfest, which now includes activities such as nordic skiing, snowmobiling, pond hockey, dog sled racing, the “Chamber Chill Plunge,” and much more! During the relatively slow winter season, this event boosts the economy of Seeley Lake and showcases the unique winter recreation opportunities available in the area. Many visitors to Winterfest decide to return in the summer months to engage in other warm-weather recreation activities on Seeley Lake and in the surrounding mountains.

 **DID YOU KNOW?**

Montana State Parks currently administers five state and federal outdoor recreation programs to meet your organization’s needs. This includes the Recreation Trails Program, Off-Highway Vehicle Program, Snowmobile Program, Land & Water Conservation Fund, and Accessible Playground Program: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/default.html>

The Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana conducts travel and recreation research for the state. Their primary focus is non-resident travel yielding statewide estimates of non-resident visitor visitation and expenditures. ITRR has a wealth of data and reports that can assist your outdoor recreation organization: <https://itr.uvm.edu/>



Butte 100 Race: The Butte 100 Race began in 2006 and was the brainchild of Butte bike enthusiasts. With 40 people registered for the first race, the race grew rapidly. The growth of the race resulted in a race cap of 350 racers. The Butte 100 has boosted Butte’s economy through racers and spectators staying in hotels, dining at local eateries, and enjoying the many amenities that Butte has to offer.

Information and image courtesy of Butte-Silver Bow Parks and Recreation

Montana Governor's Cup Walleye Tournament: The Montana Governor's Cup Walleye Tournament is an annual, three-day tournament held on Fort Peck Lake. Since its beginning in 1987, this event has been held to promote, protect and support the Fort Peck sport fishery, tourism, and recreation. Anglers across Montana and the U.S. flock to Fort Peck to participate in this unique tournament. This tournament is unique because it is the only tournament in the state that is 100% payback, meaning that all entry fees, day money, and big fish pots go back to the fishermen, with a total payout over \$120,000 in cash and prizes. With a maximum of 200 two-person teams accepted to participate, this is the single largest event in northeast Montana with the highest economic impact to the area with over \$500,000 pouring directly into local communities over the two-week period when anglers arrive and depart.



Anglers spent **\$919.3 million** in more than **3.3 million angling days** in 2017.



DID YOU KNOW?

Headwaters Economics is a Montana based organization that provides research services for organizations and communities. A notable tool they offer for free is the Economic Profile System that allows you to download socioeconomic reports for communities, counties, and states: <https://headwaterseconomics.org/>

Montana Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps members serve communities across Montana in a variety of ways. From trail work to presenting an interpretive program in a state park, AmeriCorps and Montana Conservation Corps members gain valuable skills to prepare them for the workforce while simultaneously providing a service needed in a Montana community.

Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation: The ever-growing outdoor recreation economy in Montana prompted the creation of the Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation in the fall of 2017. The need for a central office charged with growing and enhancing the outdoor recreation economy had been identified in documents such as SCORP and was supported by the outdoor recreation industry, conservation organizations, and recreation user groups. The Office of Outdoor Recreation works to identify the unique needs and topics of Montana's outdoor recreation economy including direct industry support, growth, and recruitment; outdoor recreation infrastructure access and opportunity; stewardship and conservation; education and workforce training and support; and health and well-being. The office seeks to build and maintain state, federal, and private partnerships to realize and achieve shared goals and visions regarding Montana's outdoor recreation economy.



Hunters spent **\$389.2 million** in more than **2.6 million hunter days** in 2017.

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**Improve Quality of
Life through Outdoor
Recreation Experiences**

Smith River



GOAL 4:

Improve Quality of Life through Outdoor Recreation Experiences

Recommendation: Engage senior, youth, and health-challenged populations in healthy outdoor recreation

- ◆ Promote physical exercise and outdoor recreation opportunities directly to seniors
- ◆ Coordinate outdoor recreation efforts with partners already working with senior and health-challenged populations
- ◆ Partner with education providers to develop an outdoor recreation curriculum for youth

Recommendation: Promote the health benefits of outdoor recreation

- ◆ Collaborate with healthcare industry to develop effective outdoor programming and facilities
- ◆ Partner with businesses to support and connect workplace health promotion programs to outdoor recreation opportunities



According to the U.S. Census Bureau, senior citizens (people over the age of 65) account for **14.6% of the U.S. population**. Outdoor recreation organizations should recognize that activities and programs should span from youth to seniors.

M

ontana outdoor recreation provides a rich quality of life. People live here and move here

because of access to fresh air, mountains, big sky, and open plains. Outdoor recreation experiences feed our souls and make us happy. Throughout the facilitated group discussions, members of the outdoor recreation community commented on the amazing resources that keep Montana's people physically and mentally healthy. While this is true, there is still work to be done in the state to ensure all Montanans have the outdoor recreation opportunities that meet their needs. In 2017, 25% of Montana adults reported no past month leisure time physical activity and furthermore, nearly half (45%) of Montana adults did not meet the federal physical activity guidelines for aerobic activity (recommended aerobic physical activity = at least 150 minutes/week of moderate intensity aerobic activity, or 75 minutes/week of vigorous intensity, or an equivalent combination). Physical activity is an integral part of achieving and maintaining health. By engaging more Montanans in outdoor play, participation in leisure time, physical activity, and aerobic physical activity can improve.

Reaching seniors and other health-challenged demographics to encourage their engagement in outdoor recreation should be a top priority for the state. Leisure activity involvement for seniors is associated with reduced risk of chronic illness, improved physical strength, and increased muscle strength (Grove and Spier, 1999). Researchers have found that through leisure activity, older adults experienced positive psychological and mental health aspects, such as happiness, enjoyment, and positive

emotions and feelings (Buettner & Fitzsimmons, 2002; Heo & Lee, 2010).

Partnerships between outdoor recreation organizations and those already working with seniors and health-challenged populations (e.g. healthcare, AARP) could help bolster programming. This could include increased coordination between health-care providers, Veterans Affairs, senior-care facilities, senior playgrounds, advocacy groups and others to educate and expand outdoor recreation opportunities for all. For example, municipalities and other providers should develop facilities and program for seniors. Specifically, providers should ensure that walking and hiking trails are connected, safe, accessible, and wide enough for scooters, wheelchairs, and other assistive equipment. Other approaches include adding outdoor fitness equipment to natural areas and

parks where seniors and others can participate in healthy outdoor activities. This should also be accompanied by programming that helps individuals learn how to best use equipment.

In 2017, approximately 12% of Montana adults reported experiencing frequent mental distress. Frequent mental distress is defined as 14 or more days out of the past 30 during which an individual's mental health was "not good." Mental health benefits of outdoor recreation are just as important as the physical health benefits. There is a need to further partner with the health care industry to develop effective outdoor programming for those who might be struggling with mental health. Montana has one of the highest per capita veteran populations in the U.S. (Montana Veterans Affairs). We know that programs that connect veterans to the outdoors are effective in promoting recovery from physical and mental injuries or illnesses. Further, the outdoor recreation community should integrate into the workplace and develop partnerships that connects health promotion programs to outdoor recreation opportunities.



In 2017, only **13% of Montana adults** reported eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. The USDA recommends eating 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Outdoor recreation organizations can assist in filling this critical health need by offering healthy snacks at events.



Bozeman's Highland Glen Nature Preserve: The Highland Glen Nature Preserve (HGNP) is a 430-acre plot of land in Bozeman. The land was purchased by Bozeman Health in 1956 and a land use license was signed in 2013 by Bozeman Health, Gallatin Valley Land Trust, and the City of Bozeman to allow for the creation of trails for public use. These lands were opened for public use with the intention of helping everyone have more opportunities to live a healthy outdoor lifestyle. Walking, hiking, and biking opportunities in a natural area not only yield physical benefits but other wellness benefits as well! In addition, HGNP provides habitat for an abundance of wildlife including mule deer, white-tailed deer, fox, beaver, raccoons, and other small mammals, and serves as important winter/early spring range for elk.

HGNP trails are for pedestrian and cycling use, as well as groomed cross-country ski trails for winter use in partnership with Bridger Ski Foundation. In addition, cropland on this plot is leased for farming and rangeland is leased for grazing. Bozeman Health bears the weight of property taxes and other expenses, including invasive weed management, while Bridger Ski Foundation carries the expense of grooming the winter ski trails, and Gallatin Valley Land Trust ensures security of fence entrances and exits and maintains the summer hiking trails.

HGNP serves as a segment of the Main Street to the Mountains trail system and boosts community connectivity by connecting several neighborhoods and retirement facilities to the main trail system allowing for access to downtown Bozeman and the foothills of the Gallatin range.

DID YOU KNOW?

Organizations like Montana Wilderness Association, Trout Unlimited, and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers work to show how outdoor recreation experiences correlate with quality of life. Visit their websites to find out more: <https://wildmontana.org/> <https://montanatu.org/> https://www.backcountryhunters.org/montana_bha

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) showcases three major evidence-based programs that target the senior population in becoming more active. These programs include Walk With Ease (WWE), Active Living Every Day (ALED), and Fit & Strong! (F&S!). More information can be found at <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/partnerships/initiatives/healthy-aging-in-parks/evidence-based-interventions/>



Over the next 20 years, **29,000 Montanans** could meet the CDC's recommended level of physical activity through walking and bicycling (30 min/day) saving an estimated **\$878.3 million** in healthcare costs.

Information and image courtesy of Prickly Pear Land Trust

DID YOU KNOW?

Montana's Department of Public Health and Human Services provides public health data for your organization. In particular, the Montana Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) provides information about health behaviors, mental health, and physical activity: <http://ibis.mt.gov/>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one in five U.S. children are obese or overweight. The outdoor recreation community can assist in offering programs that get children outside to engage in physically active recreation: <https://www.cdc.gov/>



Helena's "Don't Fence Me In" Trail Run: The "Don't Fence Me In Trail Run" began in 2000 to celebrate the trail system that Prickly Pear Land Trust was building on newly acquired land on Mount Ascension, with funding from an Open Space Bond and community financial support. Once the land had been acquired, trails were built and the community was invited to experience and enjoy the new trail system. The event began as a 10K, but now there is something for everyone with a 30K, 12K, 5K walk or run, and 5K dog-walk courses. With the help of staff members and hundreds of volunteers, this trail run has offered Prickly Pear Land Trust an incredible outreach opportunity. It helps the people in Helena understand their role in protecting open spaces and the importance of sustaining connection to the land.

Missoula's Fort Missoula Regional Park: Fort Missoula Regional Park (FMRP) is a multi-phase municipal park project that first opened in late April of 2017. This park project was funded via a county-wide General Obligation Parks and Trails Bond. Through surveys and support from stakeholders, including users, residents, and businesses, the need for trails, shelters, picnic areas, and play fields was communicated clearly. FMRP has blossomed into a community gathering space by providing facilities that the community asked for, including large rectangular fields, an all-inclusive playground, and opportunities for all. FMRP has been a wild success with the rectangular fields nearing capacity! In addition, FRMP has been host to the largest soccer, lawn volleyball, rugby, ultimate, pickleball, and lacrosse tournaments in Missoula history in the past three seasons. These events and tournaments have ranged from the local level to international level. The historic district at Fort Missoula has been expanded as well, with over five miles of trails, through interpretive materials, and other opportunities.

DID YOU KNOW?

To increase and encourage patient physical activity, Missoula healthcare professionals are utilizing the Missoula Prescription (Rx) Trails Program. Trails include .5- and 1-mile routes at McCormick Park and a 1-mile Rx trail at Fort Missoula Regional Park: <https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2409/Rx-Trails>



Information and image courtesy of Missoula Parks & Recreation

Information and image courtesy of Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation. Photo by Studio Macleod.



Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation: Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation (WQW) is an organization dedicated to providing therapeutic outdoor recreation experiences—specifically fly fishing—for post-9/11 veterans with both physical and invisible wounds. Nestled in the picturesque Gallatin Valley, Quiet Waters Ranch acts as home base for WQW and provides comfortable and accessible accommodations for program participants at the renovated Barnard Lodge. Participants are given opportunities to fish the private pond on the property and surrounding waterways, learn various fly-tying tips and tricks from local experts, and learn the fundamentals of fly fishing from licensed fishing guides. Warriors and Quiet Waters has provided fishing experiences for over 705 combat veterans and their spouses/caregivers since 2007. More information can be found at <https://warriorsandquietwaters.org/>.

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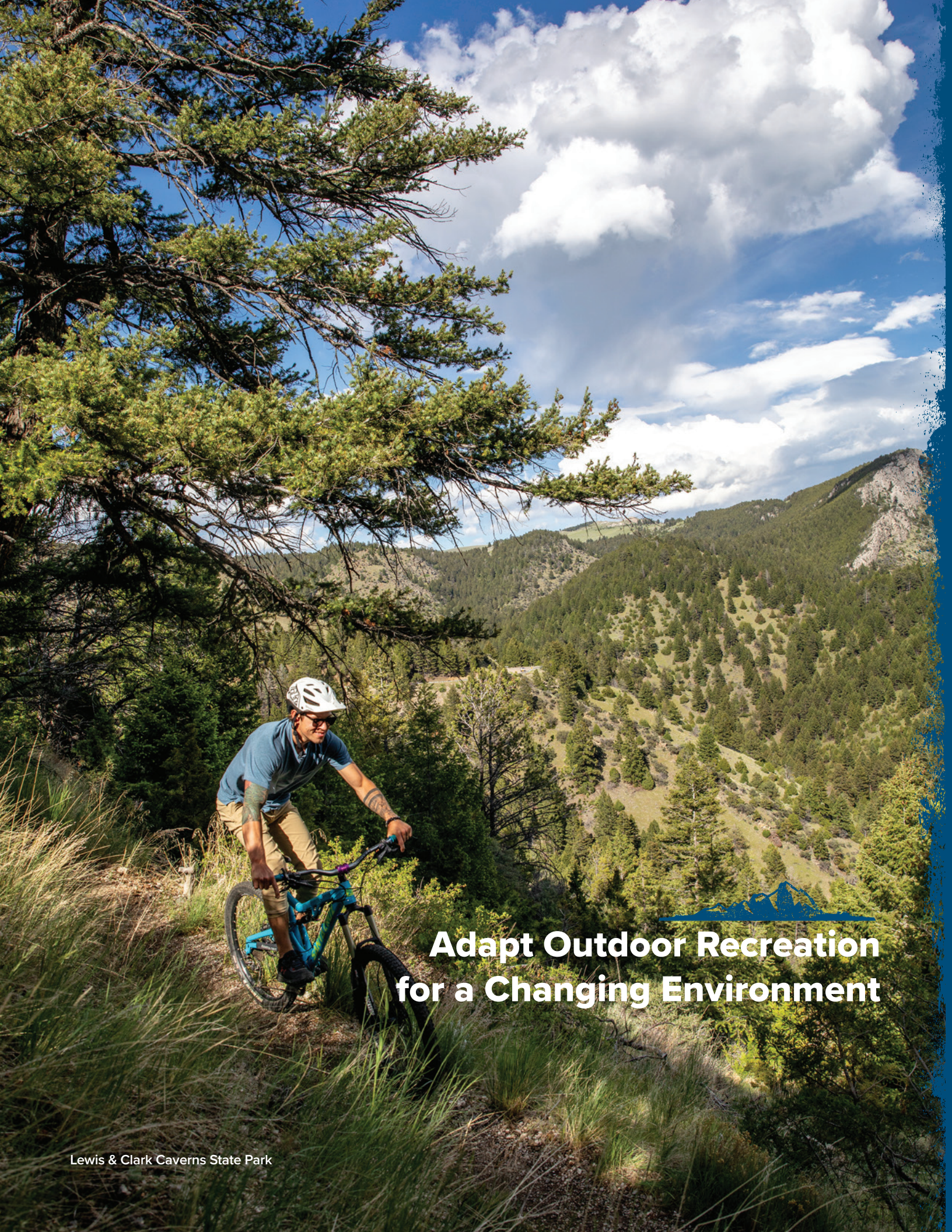
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Adapt Outdoor Recreation for a Changing Environment

GOAL 5:

Adapt Outdoor Recreation for a Changing Environment

Recommendation: Integrate with current natural hazard preparedness and response efforts

- ◆ Promote coordination and communication between outdoor recreation managers and emergency management and first responders
- ◆ Encourage outdoor recreation organizations to develop natural hazard emergency response plans

Recommendation: Integrate outdoor recreation planning with land use and community planning efforts

- ◆ Promote sustainable building and development for outdoor recreation infrastructure (green building, LEED, etc.), especially in urban interface areas
- ◆ Encourage outdoor recreation-specific climate projections and information for the outdoor recreation industry



During the 2017 fire season, **76% of all Montana residents experienced decreased air quality** and 69% of surveyed Montanans over 18 stated that smoke affected their participation in outdoor activities

A changing environment can have negative impacts on outdoor recreation experiences in Montana (Askew & Bowker, 2018). These impacts often have cascading consequences causing multiple impacts across space and time (Smith et al., 2016). For example, warming river temperatures may close streams to fishing and displace anglers to only a few rivers in the state and ultimately lead to crowding and conflict. In the instance of wildfire, parks and forests might close due to fire activity and smoke may settle in a valley preventing people from using their community outdoor recreation areas. There is recognition from climate scientists, social scientists, and outdoor recreation professionals that warmer temperatures and changing climates will continue to alter many of the recreation experiences Montanans love. It is therefore imperative for the outdoor recreation community to be part of efforts that integrate outdoor recreation into climate and environmental planning.



DID YOU KNOW?

Based at the University of Montana, the Montana Climate Office works to provide climate-related information to Montanans. Whether helping stakeholders interpret climate information or providing information for policy decision making, the Montana Climate Office has the resources to help:
<https://climate.umt.edu/default.php>

To help adapt to environmental change, a cross-jurisdictional hazard preparedness plan and redirection plan for outdoor recreation opportunities should be developed on a regional and statewide scale. Greater coordination and communication is needed between emergency management (e.g. first responder), community municipal departments (e.g. public health), and outdoor recreation managers to create clear and

concise messaging to recreationists. Outdoor recreation organizations should plan internally for climate changes and have outdoor recreation alternatives ready to announce in the case of a natural hazard.

Impacts from changing climates can influence spatial and temporal distribution of visitors on the landscape. For example, outdoor recreation places closed due to a natural hazard may increase crowding at other sites. Balancing use across recreation sites is important, but takes coordination between managers and recreation providers. A statewide, interagency working group should be developed to establish best practices for outdoor recreation providers to adapt and become more resilient to environmental change and visitor use challenges in Montana. This working group should collaboratively and creatively address workforce and staffing needs during emergency response situations and assist with crowding and conflict challenges across the state.

Outdoor recreation should be integrated and considered in community and land use planning

efforts. Efforts should be made to facilitate sustainable approaches to outdoor recreation planning and programming. For example, planners should build and develop outdoor recreation infrastructure under Leadership in Energy and



DID YOU KNOW?

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provides an evaluation framework and resource guide for planning, designing, and building green infrastructure:
<https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/partnerships/initiatives/water-conservation/greeninfrastructure/>

Building recreation facilities with LEED approved materials and meeting LEED certification standards can save water, energy, and resources and generates less waste leading to a more environmentally conscious facility:
<https://new.usgbc.org/leed>

Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards and other green building guidelines and principles. Additionally, outdoor recreation planning should consider how to best utilize smart growth principles and how to best promote active transportation.

Acquiring climate data is necessary for future outdoor recreation planning. Collaborating with entities like NOAA

and the Montana Climate Office is imperative in understanding how to bring relevant climate data to outdoor recreationists. The outdoor recreation community should be asking for climate data that assists in planning and provides information about when and how to adapt to changing conditions during peak seasons and shoulder seasons.

 **DID YOU KNOW?**

The Montana Climate Assessment was published in 2017 and was a product of Montana residents and organizations acknowledging climate change and seeing the need to gather and synthesize relevant scientific information. Chapters in the Montana Climate Assessment include “Climate Change in Montana,” “Water and Climate Change in Montana,” “Forests and Climate Change in Montana,” and “Agriculture and Climate Change in Montana”: <http://montanaclimate.org/>

Climate Smart Missoula and community partners are spearheading an effort to establish a community resilience plan in response to climate change and what climate change means for outdoor recreation: <https://www.missoulaclimate.org/healthy-community.html>


Information and image courtesy of United States Forest Service



 **DID YOU KNOW?**

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) can have both recreational and ecological impacts. From displacing native species to clinging to boat motors, aquatic invasive species can wreak havoc in the places we love most and alter our recreational experiences. It is likely that aquatic invasive species management strategies will have to adapt to account for climate change which can lead to an increase in species range and life cycles. In December 2019, FWP convened AIS partners and interested parties from across the state to discuss progress made, and next steps needed to continue advancing Montana’s AIS program. To learn more about Montana aquatic invasive species and prevention efforts, visit www.CleanDrainDryMT.com



 Approximate actual size of the aquatic invasive species Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) pictured.

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org



Recreation and Wildfire: Montana’s relationship with wildfire is ever-changing. Decades of fire suppression have led to larger and higher intensity fires that affect the landscape, wildlife, and recreation opportunities across the state. To adapt to this changing environment, land management agencies are turning the tides and re-thinking our relationship with fire and recreation. With incident management teams comprised of Montanans who know the land and share their fellow Montanan’s values, these teams work together with forest and park managers to find ways to minimize impacts, avoid closures, promptly reopen areas if closures occur, and develop the wildfire conversation in a positive direction. Incident management teams work closely with forest and park managers to make informed decisions and to develop communication strategies for information distribution. Information is communicated efficiently and effectively with Montanans and our visitors through media outlets, social media, bulletin postings, Inciweb, and more. Fire is no longer a surprise in Montana, it is a new reality. Great strides have been made to communicate the effects of fire and post-fire environments including benefits to habitat, wildlife and fisheries, new opportunities for recreation, and more.

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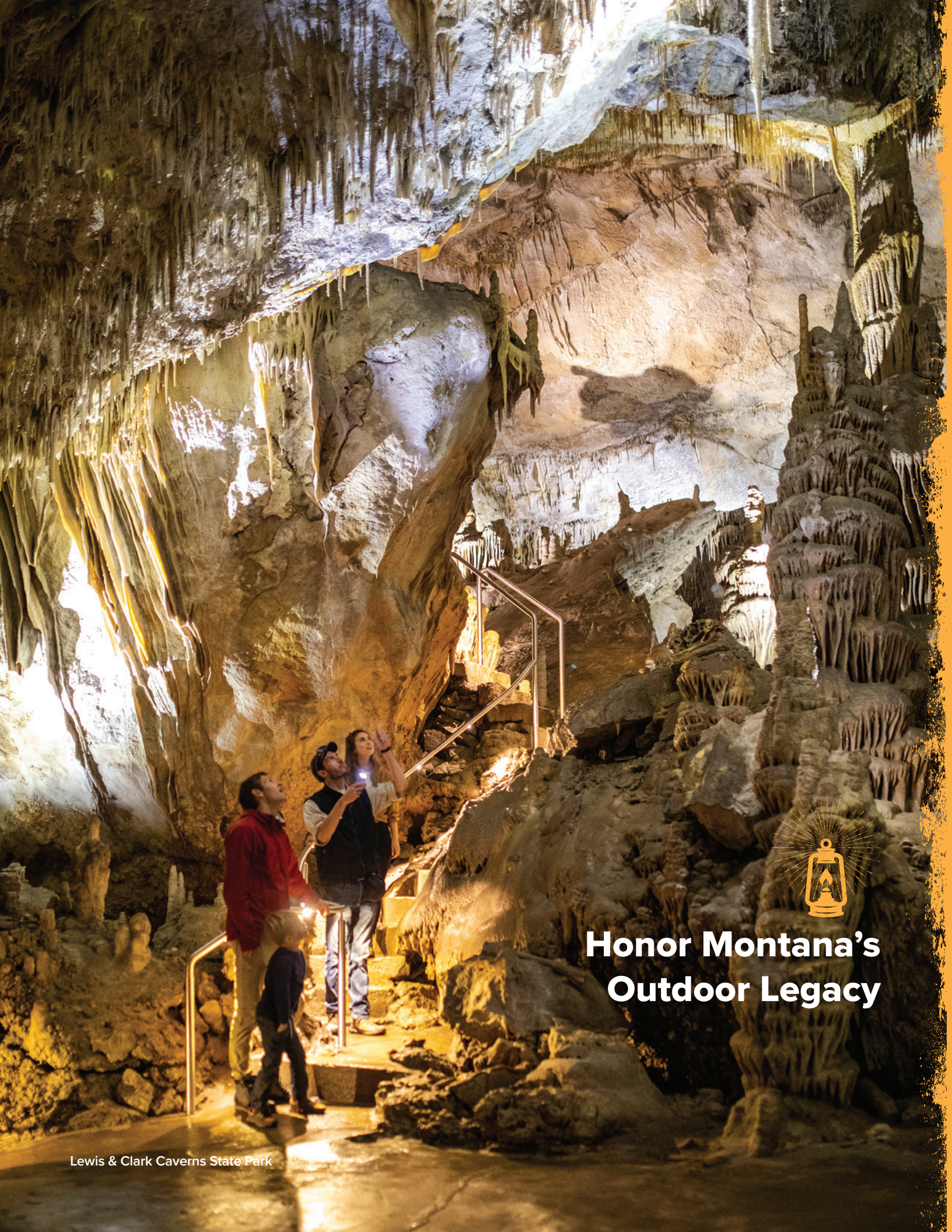
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 **DID YOU KNOW?**

With increasing wildfire frequency and intensity, Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) offer a framework for managers and planners to become better fire-adapted. Recreation managers and planners can adapt these plans to meet their needs as well. To find your Community Wildfire Protection plan, visit your County’s website or visit <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/fire-and-aviation/cwpps>.

With fluctuating temperatures in spring, flooding has become a persistent and expected natural event. When spring flooding occurs, river access can be limited and fishing access sites can close. Be aware and be prepared!



Honor Montana's Outdoor Legacy

Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park



Montana is rich with natural and cultural assets. People come from around the world to take in the sights at our parks and forests, to learn about the western way of life, and to connect with the deep traditions of our Native American cultures. There is a need to protect and conserve these resources even as outdoor recreation increases in popularity across Montana. In particular, outdoor recreation providers should be cognizant of perceptions of crowding and the social and ecological carrying capacity of a recreation resource (Manning & O’Dell, 1997). Places with increased visitor use can result in natural resource degradation and negative visitor experiences (Manning et al., 2000).



GOAL 6:

Honor Montana’s Outdoor Legacy

Recommendation: Conserve Montana’s outdoor and natural resources

- ◆ Balance outdoor recreation use with ecological function of natural resources including fish, wildlife, and their habitats
- ◆ Integrate social and ecological goals in outdoor recreation planning efforts

Recommendation: Strengthen connection with tribes through outdoor recreation

- ◆ Integrate tribal voices in outdoor recreation planning efforts
- ◆ Develop collaborative strategy with tribal members and affiliations for managing, interpreting, and sharing the value of Montana’s critical heritages, cultures, and historic sites
- ◆ Promote LWCF funding opportunities for outdoor recreation to tribes

Recommendation: Protect and preserve historic sites and heritage resources

- ◆ Continued support for preservation of historical sites and resources including tribal lands, battlefields, cultural sites, etc.
- ◆ Encourage continued education and interpretation of Montana’s heritage resources



DID YOU KNOW?

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks’ education center, Montana WILD, offers interpretive and educational displays illustrating the diversity of wildlife in Montana. In addition, Montana WILD provides many free educational programs for 4th- to 12th- grade classes including Outdoor Recreation, Living with Wildlife, Montana Fish, Wildlife Management, Meet the Mammals, and more: <http://fwp.mt.gov/education/montanaWild/programs/>

The term “ecosystem services” is often used to represent the variety of natural capital that provides diverse goods and services to human societies (e.g. water, air, habitat) (Gomez-Baggethun & Ruiz-Perez, 2011). Often, an economic amount is assigned to these services, however, more recent research has sought to understand the intrinsic value as well. While we often think about public lands as providing ecosystem services, it is

also important to acknowledge the role of working and private lands. These lands often play critical roles for buffering natural areas and providing migration corridors for wildlife. Outdoor recreation planning should balance user demands with fish, wildlife, and their habitats and promote healthy ecological functioning. Across our facilitated group discussions, participants echoed the need to “protect,” “conserve,” “maintain,” and “restore” the natural environment of Montana. In some instances, this may mean concentrating recreation use to hardened or high use areas but in other instances it may mean having to disperse use across the landscape.

In Montana, we are fortunate to have seven Indian reservations that offer a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. However, it was noted

by the SCORP Advisory Committee that the outdoor recreation community needs to engage more effectively with tribes on outdoor recreation planning efforts. Therefore, a collaborative strategy should be developed with tribal members and organizations for managing, interpreting, and sharing the value



DID YOU KNOW?

The Mission Canyon Natural Bridge is located on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and is a towering 60-foot natural wonder. In addition to sightseeing at the natural bridge, Mission Canyon is also the site for the annual Hays Powwow. The Hays Powwow is open to the public and allows visitors to experience the traditions, music, and dance of the indigenous peoples from the Fort Belknap Reservation, surrounding areas, and even Canada!



Montana is home to **seven Indian reservations** and the tribes within Montana include the Blackfeet, Chippewa Cree, Confederated Salish & Kootenai, Crow, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, Little Shell Chippewa, and Northern Cheyenne.



DID YOU KNOW?

Montana State Parks Foundation is the official nonprofit fundraising partner of Montana State Parks and strives to protect Montana's recreation heritage: <https://www.montanastateparksfoundation.org/>

Glacier National Park is home to 700 bodies of water, 1,557 miles of streams, 276 species of birds, 71 species of mammals, and many more natural wonders: <https://www.nps.gov/glac/index.htm>



Glacier National Park

Glacier photo courtesy of Rachel Shouse



Hunting photo courtesy of Kyle Mlynar

of Montana's cultural heritages and historic sites. In addition, tribal voices should be integrated in statewide outdoor recreation planning efforts in the future. Tribal integration and communications should stem beyond mainstream recreational organizations and extend to other community engagement facets such as art councils, community events, and more. We hope this recommendation will help us lay the foundation to initiate dialogue and develop pathways for funding, planning, and connection to tribal outdoor recreation needs.

In an effort to conserve Montana's heritages and historic resources, comprehensive recreation plans should integrate perspectives from a diverse group of stakeholders and identify places for continued preservation and support. Groups like hunters and anglers along with other recreation interest groups (e.g. rock climbers, motorized users, mountain bikers, hikers) should all be part of the conversation about how to best conserve Montana's rich heritages. Continued education and outreach should foster awareness surrounding Montana's outdoor heritage for future generations. Planning efforts should focus on identifying natural resources that are unique to a specific area and efforts should be made to balance outdoor recreation use with the resource base.



Makoshika Twin Sisters

Information courtesy of Montana State Parks. Image courtesy of Kristi Powell

Makoshika State Park: Makoshika State Park, voted 2017 USA Today’s Best Montana Attraction, is located in Glendive, Montana. This unique state park is Montana’s largest at roughly 12,000 acres and is home to historic natural and cultural treasures such as dinosaur fossils and Native American tools. The Cretaceous-Paleogene (K-Pg) boundary line is the layer of the Earth’s crust made from the displaced ash and debris from a volcano eruption or asteroid strike and can be found in a select few areas on Earth. Makoshika is one of those areas! You can see it, hike to it, and touch history! With 11 designated trails, visitor center, campground, archery range, disc golf course amphitheater, and a functioning paleontology lab, there is something for everyone at Makoshika.



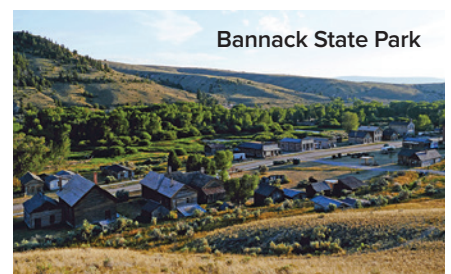
DID YOU KNOW?

Four national trails travel through Montana and provide nationally and regionally significant outdoor recreation opportunities. These trails include the Continental Divide Scenic Trail, Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, Nez Perce (Ne-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail, and the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail.



Re-enactors at Bannack Days

Bannack State Park (Dillon, Mont.) is the site of the first major gold discovery in Montana and was Montana’s first territorial capital. While there are many activities and amenities available at Bannack State Park, its claim to fame is Bannack Days. This annual summer event transforms Bannack back to its heyday with historic displays, tours, gold panning, re-enactors, and more: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/bannack/>



Bannack State Park

Montana State Parks – FWP

Montana is home to **three waterways** with sections designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers which include East Rosebud Creek, Flathead River, and the Missouri River. Find the breakdown below.

East Rosebud Creek:

Wild — 13.0 miles;
Recreational — 7.0 miles
= 20 miles total

Flathead River:

Wild — 97.9 miles;
Scenic — 40.7 miles;
Recreational — 80.4 miles
= 219.0 miles total

Missouri River:

Wild — 64.0 miles;
Scenic — 26.0 miles;
Recreational — 59.0 miles
= 149.0 miles total

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks “Kids to Fish” Program: “Kids to Fish” is a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region 6 program that allows kids, their families, and friends’ access to free fishing rods and basic tackle including hooks, sinkers and bobbers. With 43 locations to pick up fishing gear across Montana’s Hi-Line, this program encourages kids to get out and fish even though they may not have the necessary gear to do so on their own. More information about the program and gear pick-up sites can be found at: http://fwp.mt.gov/news/newsReleases/fishing/nr_1078.html.

Right: Tate Langel, FWP summer education technician, inspects fishing rods at the Hill County Library in Havre.



Information and image courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks



Flathead Lake

Flathead Lake Honoring Day: Flathead Lake Honoring Day is an educational event hosted by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, and the Flathead Lake Biological Station. This event is the product of years of collaboration and partnership between the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The goals for the event are to promote stewardship and conservation and to forge an appreciation for Flathead Lake and the organisms that call it home. High school students from surrounding schools are given the opportunity to learn about lake fisheries and fish identification, lake conservation and ecology, aquatic invasive species, and boating safety. (Information courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks)



DID YOU KNOW?

The Missouri River borders the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and flows into Fort Peck Lake. With over 1,520 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of 220 feet, there are ample opportunities for recreation including fishing, hiking, camping, and more!

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument is the site of the Battle of Little Bighorn which was fought on June 25–26, 1876 between the U.S. Army’s 7th Cavalry and the Lakota and Cheyennes. With a visitor center and self-guided driving tour, visitors are given the opportunity to learn about the complex history leading up to the battle, the battle itself, the aftermath, and the importance of remembrance and reflection: <https://www.nps.gov/libi/index.htm>

In Montana, the public lands maintained by the Bureau of Land Management are home to wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, and National Monuments that connect us with Lewis and Clarks’ journey: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/montana-dakotas>



Rosebud Battlefield State Park

Montana State Parks – FWP

Rosebud Battlefield State Park: Rosebud Battlefield State Park (Busby, Montana) is a quiet, undeveloped National Historic Landmark marking the site of the Battle of the Rosebud or, as the Northern Cheyenne call it, “Where The Girl Saved Her Brother.” Taking place on June 17, 1876, the battle was between the Northern Plains Indians (Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho) and U.S. Brigadier General George Crook and troops accompanied by Crow and Shoshone allies. Over a 6–8 hour period, 1300 soldiers and allies battled 800–1200 warriors. General Crook was stopped in his advance and his troops had no choice but to withdraw to resupply. The outcome of this battle had cascading effects in the Battle of Little Bighorn and ultimately changed the course of the Sioux Wars. The lack of development at this state park allows visitors to see the battle site as it may have appeared in 1876. In addition to the battle site, there are other historical features to view including teepee rings, homestead sites, and the Kobold Buffalo Jump. Visitors are encouraged to explore the park, enjoy a hike, look for wildlife, and reflect on America’s history.



Star Shield Petroglyph

Safety in Outdoor Recreation

It is important to recognize that there are inherent risks associated with outdoor recreation. Some activities and places can be dangerous if you don’t prepare and plan appropriately. We want to recognize that keeping Montanans safe is equally as important as providing enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences. There are several resources you can use to help you plan for recreation including:

Montana State Parks: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/your-safety/>

Leave No Trace: <https://lnt.org/>

National Park Service: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/healthandsafety/index.htm>

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**Looking
Forward**



Montana State Parks – FWP

Little Shell Powwow

LOOKING FORWARD

Throughout the SCORP process various ideas were brought forth to guide and improve future planning efforts. These ideas were first discussed by the SCORP Advisory Committee and echoed by many who engaged in our public comment period. We believe that these ideas will strengthen and guide future planning and SCORP efforts.

1. Tribal Inclusion and Awareness

A voice that was largely absent from this planning process was from our Native American outdoor recreation professionals. While efforts were made to be inclusive, there was not enough time in the SCORP process to have all voices included. Looking forward, we would like to suggest that the next SCORP planning effort engages tribal leaders at least 2 years prior to the completion of the SCORP.

To assist with tribal awareness it is imperative that we consider how to best acknowledge ancestral lands at our outdoor recreation areas. Formal land acknowledgements, consultation with tribal leaders, and engagement with tribal members can all be formalized in outdoor recreation planning processes. Looking forward, we anticipate outdoor recreation plans to be inclusive of tribal voices and to acknowledge the ancestral lands of Native Americans.

2. Evaluating SCORP Outcomes

Throughout the SCORP process several individuals asked about “successes” from the previous SCORP. There were some readily accessible answers like the Office of Outdoor Recreation being funded and the number of grants funded through LWCF Funds. However, there was also a desire to have some formalized measurement to evaluate SCORP. Looking forward, we would like to empower the outdoor recreation community to consider how to best measure the utility of SCORP. This can be the number of projects funded through recreation grants, diversity of LWCF applications, awareness of LWCF funding opportunities, or other metrics. The State Parks and Recreation Board has endorsed this plan and will continue to check in with staff and others on progress made on an annual basis.

3. ADA Inclusion and Improvements

Although there is a rich natural resource base for outdoor recreation in Montana, there are a scarcity of sites that offer ADA accessible recreation. ADA accessibility is critical for residents and for non-resident visitors who want to come to Montana. Looking forward, we expect that local, state, and federal outdoor recreation providers will maintain and improve accessibility through new facilities and resources.

4. Data Collection for the Next SCORP

This SCORP was largely an update of the 2014–2018 SCORP. During the previous effort, Montana State Parks engaged in a robust data collection effort that included a resident survey, needs assessment of outdoor recreation providers, and updating the BRFS questions. Looking forward, every ten years the SCORP should include a comprehensive data collection effort to inform the planning process. This interval seems appropriate given how trends change and it matches the resources available for SCORP.



Appendices

APPENDIX A Contacts and Resources

CONTACTS

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks — State Parks Division	http://stateparks.mt.gov/about-us/
Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation	https://business.mt.gov/Office-of-Outdoor-Recreation
United States Forest Service — Region 1	https://www.fs.usda.gov/r1
Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation	http://dnrc.mt.gov/
Bureau of Land Management	https://www.blm.gov/montana-dakotas
University of Montana W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation	https://www.cfc.umt.edu/
National Park Service — Glacier National Park	https://www.nps.gov/glac/index.htm
Montana Trails Recreation Park Association	https://www.mtrpa.info/

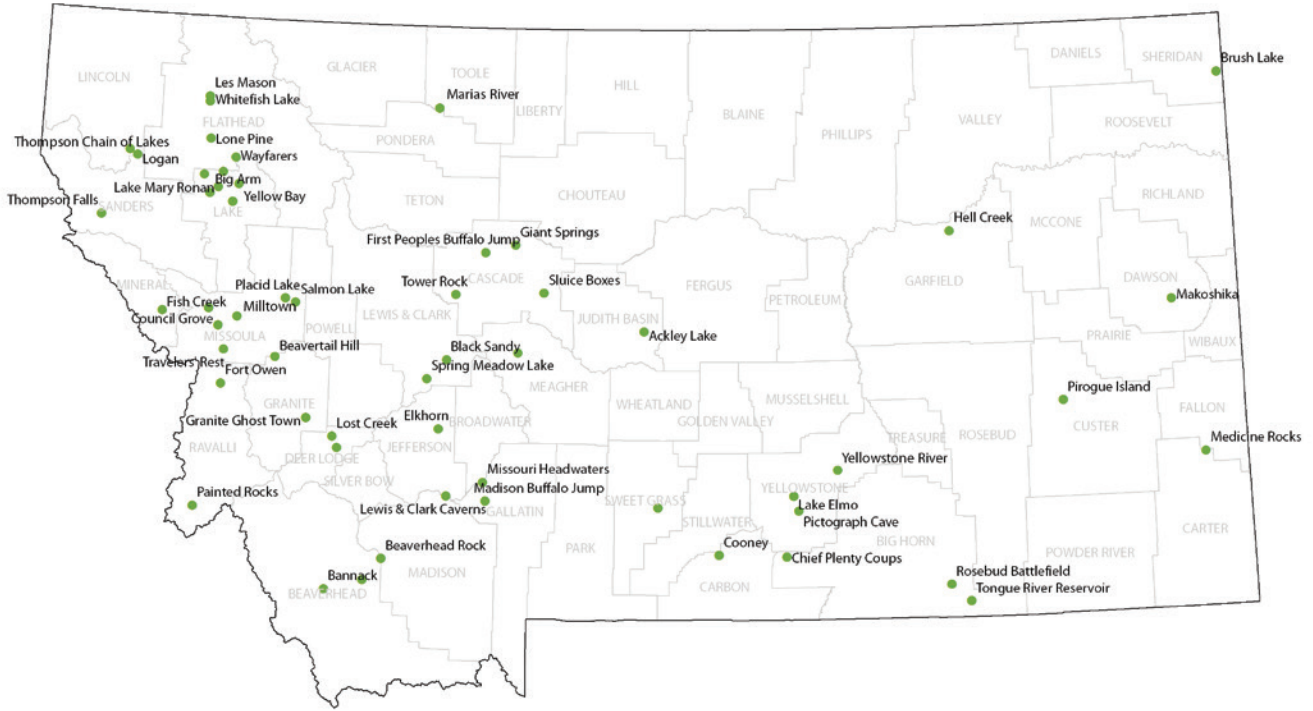
RESOURCES

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers	https://www.backcountryhunters.org/montana_bha
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	https://www.cdc.gov/
Children & Nature Network	https://www.childrenandnature.org/
Climate Smart Missoula	https://www.missoulaclimate.org/healthy-community.html
Great American Rail-Trail	https://www.railstotrails.org/greatamericanrailtrail/route/montana/
Headwaters Economics	https://headwaterseconomics.org/
Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research	https://itr.umt.edu/
Missoula Prescription (Rx) Trails Program	https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2409/Rx-Trails
Missoula YWCA GUTS Program	https://ywcaofmissoula.org/services/girls-empowerment-guts/
Montana Climate Assessment	http://montanaclimate.org/
Montana Climate Office	https://climate.umt.edu/
Montana Community Wildlife Protection Plans	http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/forestry/fire-and-aviation/cwpps
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks — Aquatic Invasive Species	www.CleanDrainDryMT.com
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks ADA Links	http://fwp.mt.gov/recreation/ctb/links.html
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks — Fishing Access Sites Field Guide	http://fwp.mt.gov/fish/guide/fasGuide.html
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks — Hunt Planner	https://myfwp.mt.gov/fwpPub/planahunt
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks — Waterbody Search	https://myfwp.mt.gov/fishMT/explore

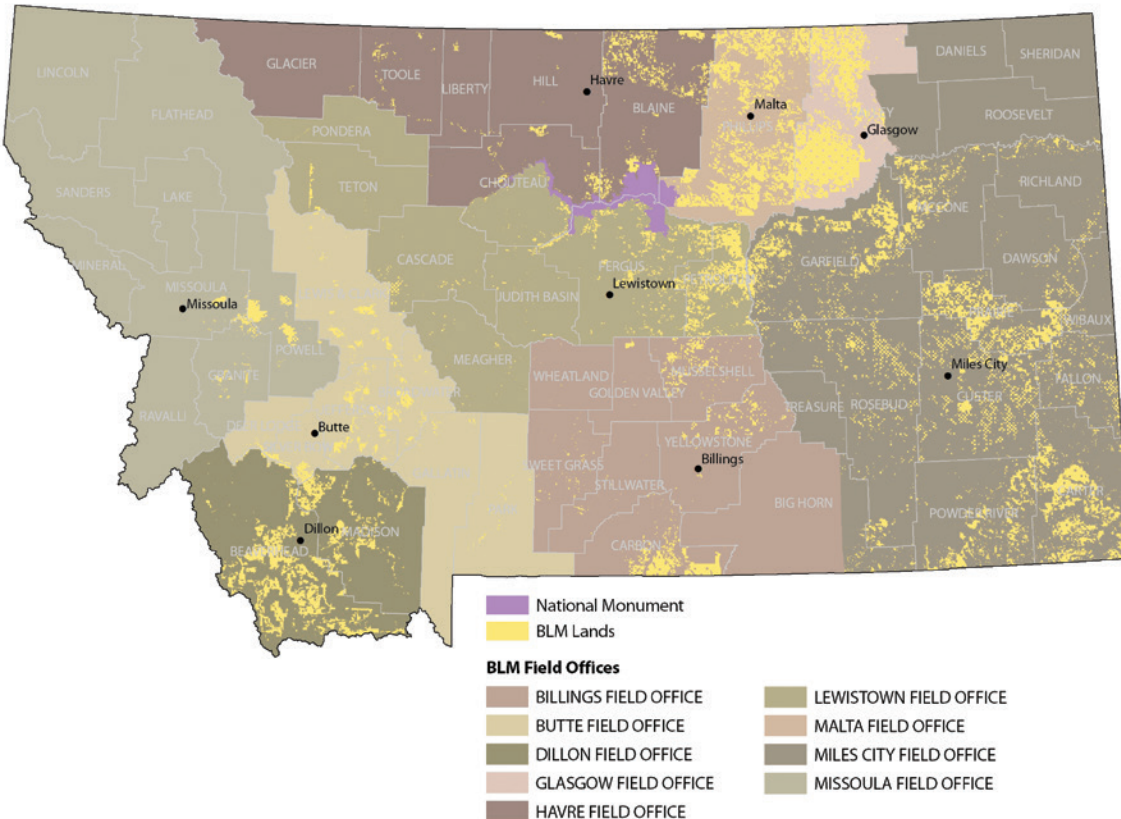
RESOURCES, continued

Montana Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs	https://tribalnations.mt.gov/tribalnations
Montana Outdoor Science School (MOSS)	http://www.outdoorscience.org/
Montana Public Health Information System	http://ibis.mt.gov/
Montana State Park LWCF 2019 Community Grants	https://myfwp.mt.gov/getRepositoryFile?objectID=90247
Montana State Park Recreation Programs	http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/default.html
Montana State Park Recreation Grants	http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/lwcf.html
Montana State University Billings — Outdoor Adventure Leadership Program	https://www.msubillings.edu/cahp/hhp/Outdoor_Adventure_Leadership.htm
Montana Trails Recreation Parks Association	https://www.mtrpa.info/
Montana WILD	http://fwp.mt.gov/education/montanaWild/programs/
Montana Wilderness Association	https://wildmontana.org/
National Recreation and Park Association	https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/partnerships/initiatives/healthy-aging-in-parks/evidence-based-interventions/
National Parks Service “Every Kid in a Park” Program	https://www.nationalparks.org/our-work/campaigns-initiatives/every-kid-park
National Recreation and Park Association Green Infrastructure	https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/partnerships/initiatives/water-conservation/greeninfrastructure/
onX Maps	https://www.onxmaps.com/
Outdoor Industry Association	https://outdoorindustry.org/
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation — Public Access	http://www.rmef.org/Conservation/PublicAccess.aspx
Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals	https://www.recpro.org/
Trout Unlimited	https://montanatu.org/
Trust for Public Lands	https://www.tpl.org/
U.S. Access Board	https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities
U.S. Green Building Council — LEED	https://new.usgbc.org/leed
University of Montana Rural Institute	http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/
USFS Accessibility Guidebook	https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/
USFS National Visitor Use Monitoring Program	https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/
USFS Tree Search	https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/
Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation	https://warriorsandquietwaters.org/
Wounded Warrior Project — Project Odyssey	https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/combat-stress-recovery-program/project-odyssey

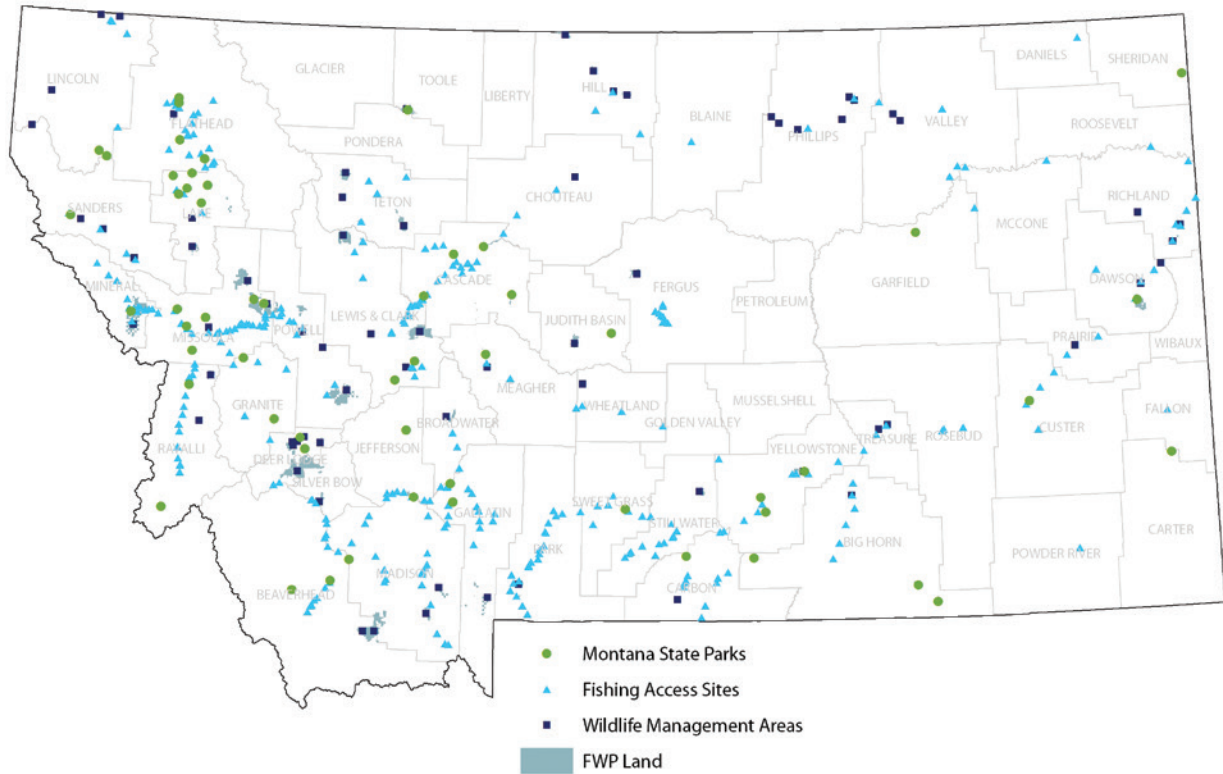
Montana State Parks



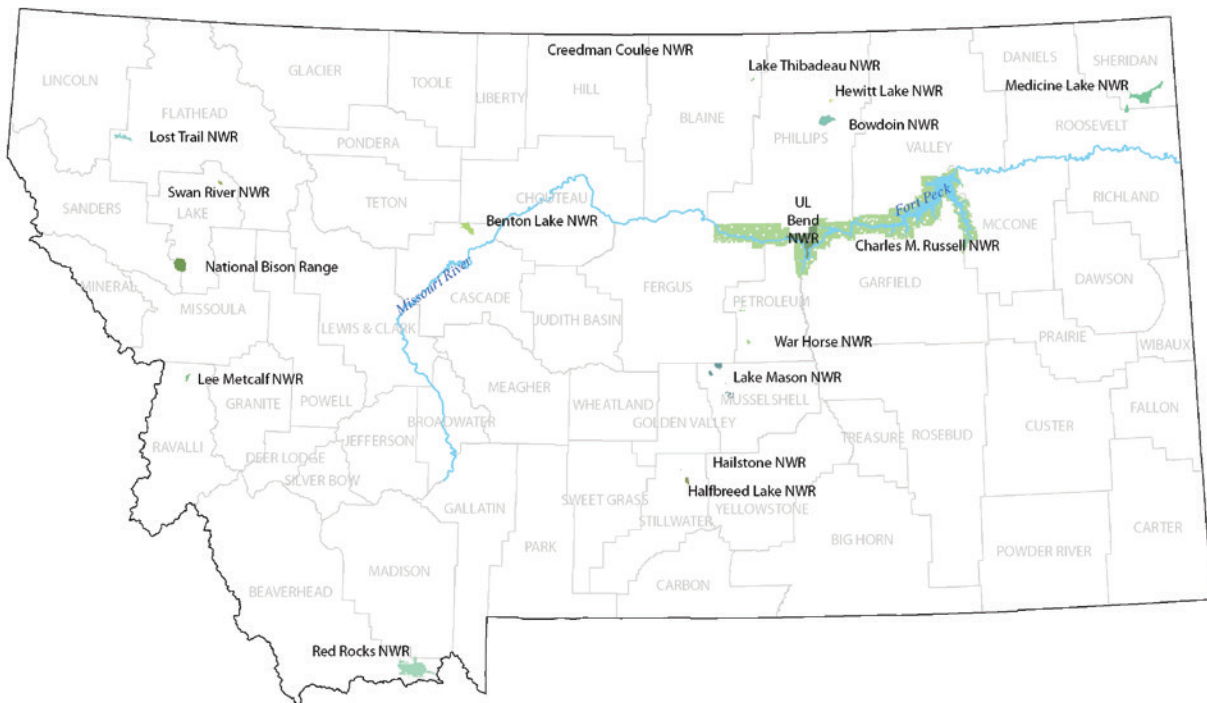
Bureau of Land Management in Montana



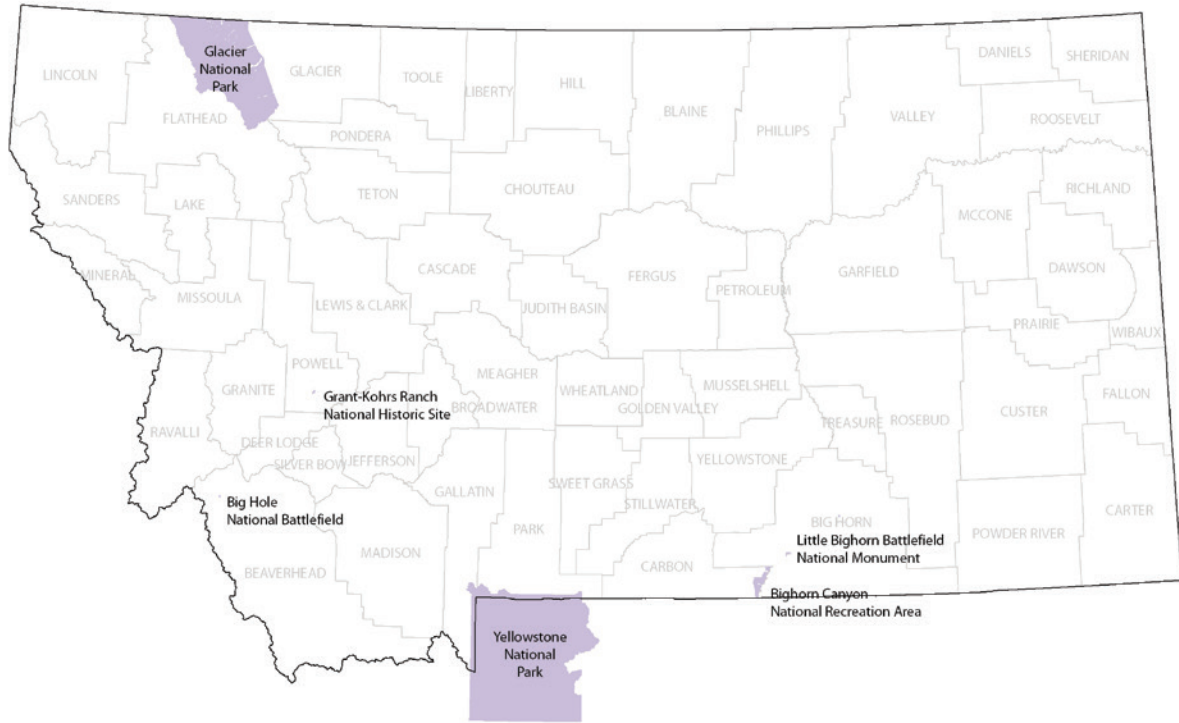
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Lands



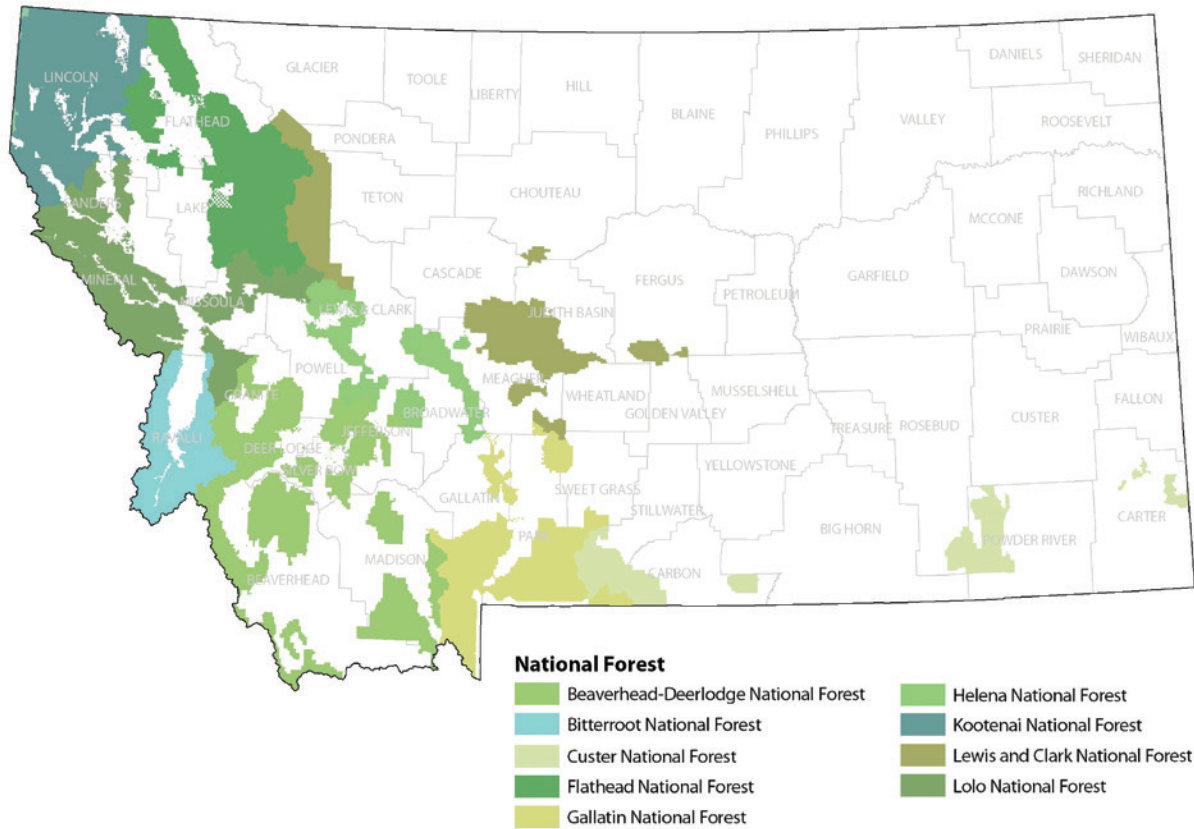
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Lands and National Wildlife Refuges in Montana



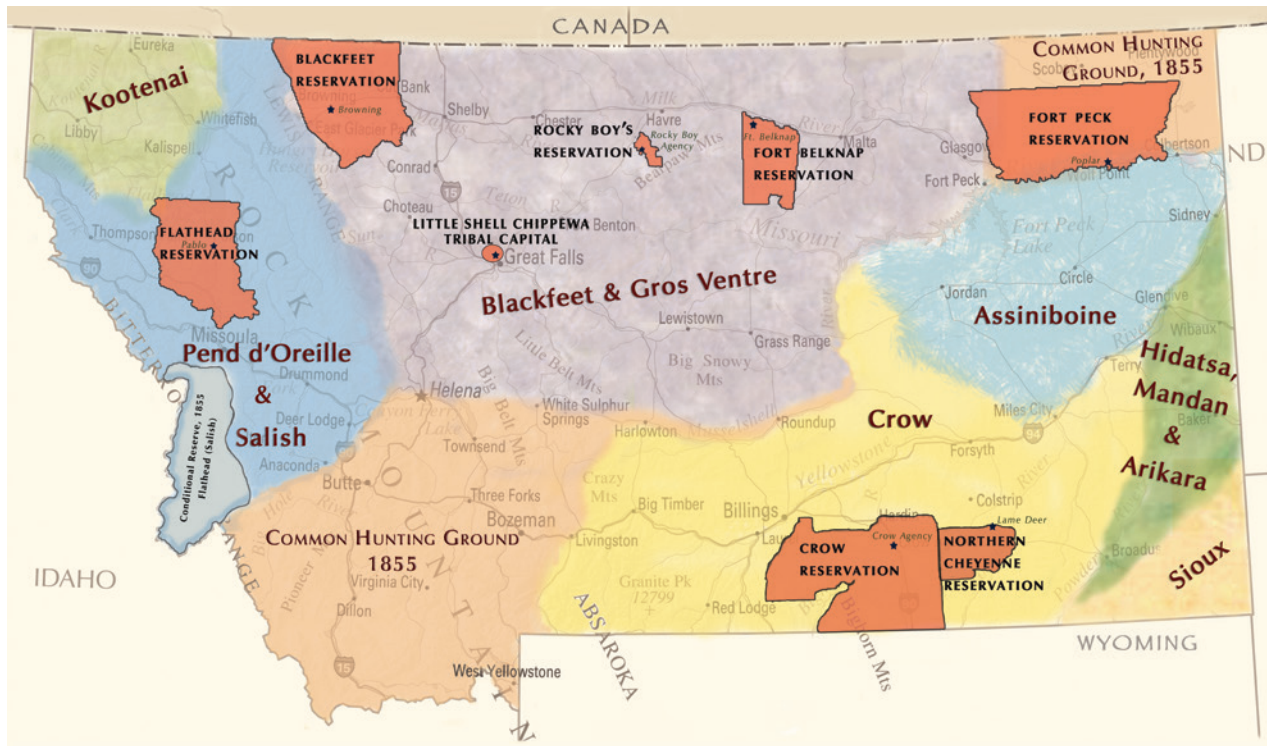
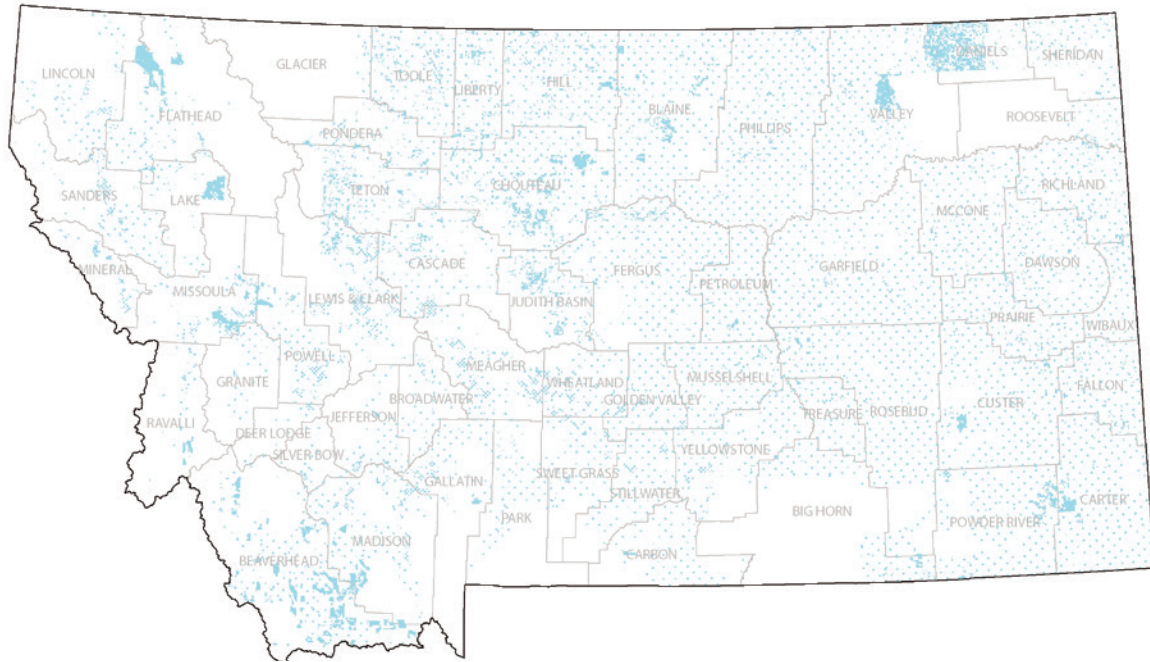
National Park Service in Montana



National Forests in Montana



Department of Natural Resources and Conservation State School Trust Lands



Tribal Territories in Montana

Boundaries as defined by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, and the Flathead and Blackfeet Treaties of 1855.*

Reservations today shown in red.
 ★ Star indicates location of tribal capital.

Names Tribes Call Themselves: A Key			
Salish / Sélish	Blackfeet / Niitsitapi (Pikuni)	Gros Ventre / A'aninin	Northern Cheyenne / Tsetsêhesêstâhase and So'taa'eo'o
Pend d'Oreille / Qlisép	Chippewa (Ojibwe) / Annishinabe	Assiniboine / Nakoda, Nakona	Crow / Apsáalooke
Kootenai / Ksanka	Plains Cree / Ne-i-yah-wahk	Sioux / Lakota, Dakota	Little Shell Chippewa / Annishinabe and Métis

Reservation Lands in Montana, and American Indian Tribes based on those lands

Blackfeet Reservation: Blackfeet Fort Belknap Reservation: Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Rocky Boy's Reservation: Chippewa Cree	Crow Reservation: Crow Fort Peck Reservation: Assiniboine and Sioux Landless, but headquartered in Cascade County: Little Shell Band of Chippewa	Flathead Reservation: Salish, Pend d'Oreille, Kootenai Northern Cheyenne Reservation: Northern Cheyenne
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* Boundaries shown on this map reflect the demarcation of territories by non-Indian officials at treaty time, and do not necessarily accurately represent tribal territories occupied in the 1850s. © 2010 Regional Learning Project, The University of Montana, Missoula.

Facilitated Group Discussion Data Collection

Introduction:

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the guiding document for community outdoor recreation projects across Montana. An updated SCORP is required in order to receive Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars. Utilization of LWCF monies acquired through the 2014–2018 SCORP paved the way for many success stories across Montana including the creation of the Montana Governor’s Office of Outdoor Recreation, the Montana State Park Strategic Plan, and a Montana DNRC Public Access Coordinator. In addition, many small communities across the state applied for LWCF grant funding for local community projects which can be found below.

2018 PROPOSED LWCF PROJECTS

SPONSOR	PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT
1 Alberton	Hank Roat Memorial Park Renovation	\$100,000.00
2 Billings	Rose Park Playground Replacement	\$150,000.00
3 Boulder	Parks Project	\$52,065.50
4 Deer Lodge	West Side Park Playground Upgrades	\$21,000.00
5 Ennis School District	Ball Fields, Track, and Playground Renovation	\$60,300.00
6 Gallatin County	Regional Park Phase IV	\$150,000.00
7 Helena	Cherry Park ADA Playground	\$80,000.00
8 Lewistown	Creekside Restroom and Kiosk	\$138,000.00
9 Milltown State Park	Bandmann Flats Trailhead and Trails	\$145,000.00
10 Shelby	Shelby Swimming Pool Gutter Replacement	\$55,000.00
11 Thompson Falls	Pool Improvements	\$46,700.00
12 Townsend School District	Playground Replacement	\$61,587.85
13 Wolf Point	Wolf Point Swimming Pool Renovation	\$150,000.00
		\$1,209,653.35

Methods:

Three facilitated group discussions were held in Kalispell, Butte, and Billings during March of 2019. These locations were chosen to reflect the diversity of recreation opportunities across the state. While Bozeman and Missoula were not chosen as meeting locations, it was well understood that their needs and concerns would be represented at these meetings as well. We did recognize that some rural, far-reaching communities may have had trouble attending the meetings, but we tried to cast the widest net feasible due to the time constraints for the data gathering process.

After meeting locations, dates, and times were set, the contact compiling process began. Recreation professionals from across Montana received an invitation via email to participate in one of the three facilitated group discussions. Invitees represented the wide breadth of recreation across the state, ranging from the federal level to municipalities, public entities to private, and agencies to small businesses. Upwards of 300+ professionals were invited to participate in one of the three discussions.

48 people RSVP'd for the Kalispell meeting, 41 people RSVP'd for the Billings meeting, and 74 RSVP'd for the Butte meeting. These meetings were scheduled for approximately three hours and attendees were divided into small groups, roughly 7–10 people per group, and were asked to collectively and collaboratively answer several questions regarding outdoor recreation. Meeting participants were encouraged to wear their respective “hats” but also to think outside the box on a statewide level. A wide variety of comments and suggestions were provided at these meetings, however, it is unfortunately not feasible to address every comment or suggestion in this report. It should be noted that each comment provided at each meeting was taken into account and considered. Below is a collection of answers to the given prompts that were repeatedly mentioned across the three meeting locations.

Question 1: What makes Montana outdoor recreation great?

This question yielded a wide array of answers ranging from specific activities such as hunting and fishing, to Montana’s clean water and wilderness areas. While many specific answers were given, three broad categories appeared in Kalispell, Butte and Billings: access, year-round recreation opportunities, and Montanans collective pride in our recreation opportunities.

1. ACCESS

The term “access” was discussed at all three meetings in various ways and attendees were told to further push their definition of what they mean by “access.” This included stream access (stream access laws), ADA compliance, forest access, public land access and access to recreation opportunities in both frontcountry and backcountry.

2. YEAR-ROUND OPPORTUNITIES

Montana offers year-round recreation opportunities catering to any and all recreation interests. In the winter, there are world-class skiing opportunities, opportunities for snowmobiling, snowshoeing, ice skating, ice fishing, cross-country skiing, and much more. Spring, summer, and fall offer opportunities for hiking, biking, wildlife watching, fly fishing, etc. The availability of year-round recreation opportunities makes Montana unique and allows residents to remain immersed in the outdoors no matter the season.

3. SHARED STEWARDSHIP AND PRIDE

Due to great public land access and year-round opportunities that Montana provides its residents, Montanans hold their pride and stewardship of the land to a very high standard. A common goal among residents is to care for Montana and the natural resources and recreation opportunities provided so that everyone can enjoy them into the future.

Question 2: What are the critical outdoor recreation needs in Montana?

1. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

A common theme that was repeated many times was the dire need for alternative funding sources for outdoor recreation or the need to diversify funding sources. While the lack of funding/deferred maintenance is discussed heavily at the federal level, it is also a significant issue at the local level. One example that was given highlighted community trail projects that have been completed but cannot be maintained now due to lack of funding.

2. NEED FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Getting youth back into unstructured outdoor play to foster local stewards of the land from a young age is crucial. This unstructured play could be in addition to programs, education and exposure to outdoor recreation and environmental issues.

3. ADA ACCESSIBILITY

While there are some ADA accessible trails that allow for use of wheelchairs and strollers, there is a need for a greater amount of trails that allow for this type of use. This could include education and more widely available information for people who are interested in learning more about what constitutes an ADA trail and where such trails may be found.

4. BETTER INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Interagency cooperation and coordination is essential in order to have a cohesive, statewide approach to outdoor recreation. A lack of interagency coordination can cause a spread of misinformation, create frustration between agencies/groups, and confusion amongst locals and tourists.

5. MORE EFFECTIVE VISITOR-USE MANAGEMENT

Due to the large number of people who visit Montana during a one year period, being able to efficiently and effectively manage visitors, their activities, and the land can cause a snowball effect in how the resources are cared for, used, and managed. Educational tools are needed for visitors as it can be difficult for people to find accurate, reliable, and up-to-date information. It is also important to understand the types of experiences visitors are looking for versus the experiences locals are looking for.

6. FACILITIES FOR SENIORS

Montana has a growing need for infrastructure and opportunities that are related to the senior population. Not only is there a need to get youth active in the outdoors, it's important to sustain interest in outdoor recreation from a young age all the way through retirement. The concept of adult/elderly playgrounds were brought up during the meetings as a way to adapt to changing demographics and community needs. There are examples of playgrounds catering to seniors in large cities such as Beijing, London, Bangkok, and Manchester.

7. "UMBRELLA" GROUP/STATEWIDE WORKING GROUP

Montana has a large variety of stakeholders who have an interest in outdoor recreation. These stakeholders range from adventure companies to small businesses and governmental organizations. With such a large group of stakeholders all having similar needs and interests, it would be beneficial for Montana to have statewide working group with the sole purpose of gathering and compiling like information for easy access by stakeholders. This could include information regarding volunteers, funding opportunities, and liability insurance for volunteers. This working group would relieve staff from having to spend a majority of their time coordinating these efforts and therefore allow for more time to be spent working on projects.

8. CENTRAL INFORMATION HUB/ONE INTERACTIVE SOURCE

With tourism being one of the largest economic drivers for the state of Montana, a central location or interactive source to find information regarding travel and outdoor recreation opportunities would be an asset. This would not only be beneficial to tourists, but would benefit locals as well. Finding current and accurate information can be a difficult task when there is such a large variety of opportunities across the state at all levels of difficulty and interest. Creating a user-friendly, multi-layered interactive platform would create a more cohesive space for agencies and organizations to cross-check material and ensure that recreationists are given reputable, up-to-date information.

Questions 3/4: What should be our top priorities for outdoor recreation in Montana for the next five years? Recommendations/action items for achieving those priorities?

1. MAINTAINING QUALITY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES/ EXPERIENCES

With an increase in pressure on certain recreation areas, it is of the utmost importance to develop creative ways to displace some of this pressure out to other areas.

For example, Glacier National Park has been experiencing high visitation numbers and lacks the space and infrastructure needed to meet the demands of visitors. To combat this, managers and recreation professionals must collaboratively work together to develop activities and places to direct people towards, instead of just visiting “high-profile” areas such as the National Parks. This can be achieved through cross-agency cooperation and collaboration utilizing tools such as advertising strategies, interpretive materials, and the possible implementation of an app that displays different recreation opportunities available in a given area. Creating a “one-stop shop,” interactive application (in addition to traditional paper maps) with multiple overlays would allow both locals and visitors to see all that is available. This in turn would likely alleviate pressure from popular recreation areas.

2. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Education surrounding the importance of resource stewardship, conservation, and environmental issues and addressing the consequences of overuse should be implemented in schools. Short programs (and the possibility of field trips) could be implemented discussing proper trail etiquette and the importance and benefits of recreating outside (both mental and physical health). In addition, teaching children and young adults what they can do to ensure the continued health of Montana’s recreation opportunities and resources is crucial to ensure the establishment of a new, enthusiastic, and forward-thinking generation of land stewards.

3. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding for recreation has historically been an issue in Montana and was a hotly discussed topic throughout this data collection process. Funding is not only needed for the establishment of new recreation opportunities, but also for the maintenance of already established ones. One solution is to diversify funding sources. Another is the establishment of a fund dedicated solely for outdoor recreation purposes. This fund could include monies for new projects or monies for maintenance or further acquisition. In addition, creating a plan to ensure the continued reauthorization of LWCF funding is necessary. A general recreation use license/fee would generate a new funding stream for outdoor recreation instead of the revenue generated from sources such as Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson, or hunting/fishing licenses. These new funding sources would likely be implemented through legislation.

APPENDIX D Wetland Priority Integration

Wetlands

Since the passage of the Emergency Wetlands Act (EWRA, Public Law 99–645, S. 303), in 1986, the National Park Service has directed each state to include a wetlands component as part of the SCORP. Under this act, each state must address the following through the SCORP Wetlands Component:

1. Be consistent with the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan, prepared by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service;
2. Provide evidence of consultation with the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources;
3. Contain a listing of those wetland types which should receive priority for acquisition; and
4. Consider outdoor recreation opportunities associated with its wetlands resources for meeting the state's public outdoor recreation needs.

The LWCF program provides funding for Section 6F Mitigation of Wetlands in cases where public outdoor recreation facility development will impact existing wetlands, or in cases where a community or eligible agency desires to acquire (through purchase or conservation easement) wetlands for outdoor recreation purposes.

This section of the SCORP reviews the types and classes of wetlands in Montana, significant programmatic efforts aimed at wetlands protection and management, and provides a prioritized list of attributes for wetland acquisition in Montana.

Wetland Management in Montana

Montana has lost approximately one-third of its naturally occurring wetlands since settlement. Wetlands are valuable for providing flood and erosion control, enhancing water quality, sustaining baseflow in headwater streams, providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, and providing wildlife and fish habitat. The Federal Clean Water Act requires mitigation for some wetland filling projects, however, wetlands continue to be impacted and lost as roads are expanded, land is developed and due to cumulative impacts from numerous activities such as draining, changes in land management, and landowner preference for open water ponds.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Water Protection Bureau is responsible for coordinating and providing leadership to wetland conservation activities state-wide (DEQ). One activity is to staff and provide leadership to the Montana Wetland Council. The Council acts as a forum for all stakeholders to participate in wetland issues. With DEQ leadership and extensive public involvement, the Council developed *Priceless Resources: Strategic Framework for Wetland and Riparian Area Conservation and Restoration in Montana 2013–2017*, which guides the Council and all involved in wetland issues, in pursuing wetland conservation activities and establishes priorities for managing wetlands over the next five-year period (DEQ, 2013). The Strategic Framework was approved by the Governor and Directors of the DEQ, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks as the state plan for wetlands and riparian areas. Several working groups are being formed to help implement the Strategic Framework. The SCORP references the 2013–2017 Strategic Plan as the main guiding document for wetland conservation priorities in Montana. The 2013–2017 Strategic Plan

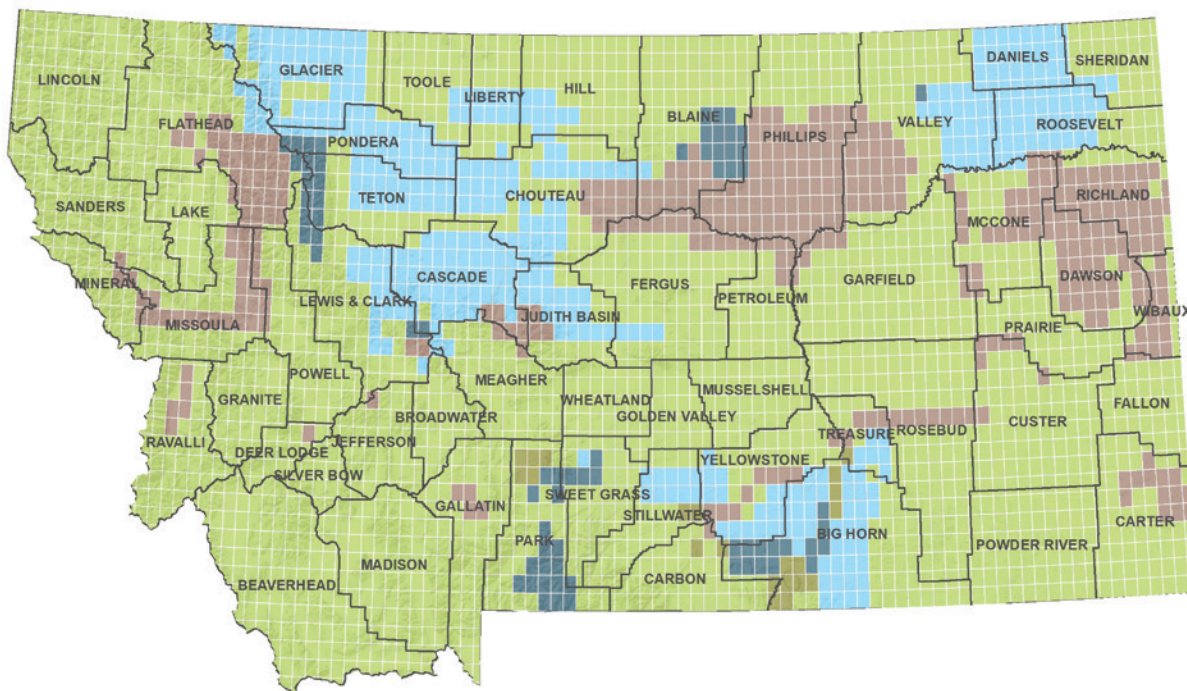
is being updated for 2020–2030 and the updated version will serve as the main guiding document for wetland conservation priorities in Montana when completed. The plan can be found on the Montana DEQ Wetland Program website.

Wetland conservation priorities are funded by a competitive Environmental Protection Agency Wetland Program Development Grant program. Currently, there are four active grants involving state and tribal governments and universities in Montana. These projects range from an Evaluation of Wetland Impacts in the State of Montana, to providing Education and Information about Montana Wetlands through the Montana Wetland Council, and developing technical resources for land use planning.

Wetlands Mapping and Classifications

Since 2008, the Montana Natural Heritage Program has been tremendously successful in advancing digital mapping for wetland and riparian areas in Montana (Montana Natural Heritage Program). Prior to 2007, 43% of Montana had digital wetland mapping created from 1980s-era aerial imagery. Currently 100% of the State has wetland mapping; however, 14% of the mapping is outdated digital mapping created from 1980s-era aerial imagery. Since 2007, 83% of the state has been mapped or updated with modern wetland and riparian mapping using aerial imagery from 2005–2017. An additional 3% of Montana is funded for updates to modern mapping, including areas that previously had no wetland mapping.

Wetland and Riparian Mapping Status by USGS Topographic Quad



- Modern Mapping Completed by Montana Natural Heritage Program
- Modern Mapping in Progress by Montana Natural Heritage Program
- Scheduled to be Mapped by Montana Natural Heritage Program
- Scheduled to be Updated by Montana Natural Heritage Program
- Outdated Mapping (NWI Legacy) by USFWS

Recreation Values of Wetlands

Wetlands are vitally important for habitat and ecology. Less than 3% of Montana is comprised of wetlands (1% of Montana is riparian habitat), yet 50% of bird species depend on these important areas (Montana Audubon). In addition to being critical habitat for birds and other wildlife, wetlands assist in water purification and flood control. In the prairie pothole region of northeast Montana, for instance, over 225 species of birds use these declining wetland areas for nesting. Included in this number are piping plover and bald eagle. These areas are also of critical importance to several endangered species during migration, including the whooping crane, interior least tern and peregrine falcon. Wetland areas adjacent to rivers act like a sponge to absorb water during spring runoff, capturing the water and releasing it later in the year. This not only reduces the damage of flooding, but also reduces erosion.

Wetlands are also significant components to the recreation landscape. Wetlands provide endless opportunities for popular recreational activities, such as hiking, boating, hunting, fishing, bird-watching, photography, and interpretation and education. Almost everyone likes being on or near the water, and the presence of so many fascinating life forms makes Montana's wetlands especially enjoyable treasures. According to the *2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation—Montana* produced by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, over 570,000 Montanans participated in wildlife recreation (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service). Of these, 71% participated in wildlife-watching activities in 2011. 47% percent participated in fishing, and 26% participated in hunting. This contributed \$1.4 billion to local and state economies for wildlife recreation. Recreationists spend significant amounts of money on equipment and travel-related expenses, including gas, food and lodging. The majority of their activities depended upon the existence of healthy, productive wetlands and riparian habitats. In addition to recreation, wetlands also provide an important resource for educational purposes, and many Montana public schools take students on wetland field trips to learn about habitats and wildlife, and help monitor water quality and other stewardship projects.

Clean water goes hand-in-hand with a strong economy. Montana farmers, ranchers, and commercial activities need water to produce crops, livestock, and manufactured goods. Healthy ecosystems also attract tourists and recreation dollars. According to the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR), clean water is the top attribute that non-residents come to Montana to experience and enjoy (Nickerson). Maintaining clean water in Montana is vital to providing critical habitat, and also helps to attract the more than 10 million visitors a year. Wetlands also add economic value to communities as important components of parks, open space, trail systems, and wildlife habitat, contributing significantly to the quality of life for area residents. Additionally, private property values can benefit from the protection of these areas: ponds, streams, and lakes can increase the value and marketability of nearby parcels of land. And as property values increase, this in turn may translate into increased local tax revenue to support local government services. It is difficult to calculate the monetary value provided to communities by protection of wetlands and riparian areas, however the value of wetlands can no longer be disputed.

Priority Acquisitions

DEQ and the Montana Wetland Council are the leading bodies to prioritize wetland conservation strategies in Montana. As the mapping of wetlands in Montana is not yet complete, specific parcels have not been identified for priority acquisitions. Working in consultation with the DEQ Wetland Coordinator and the Montana Natural Heritage Program during the SCORP planning process, a set of values have been identified to direct priority acquisitions for LWCF funding. During the establishment of priorities under the Open Project Selection Process, projects under consideration for LWCF funding that provide meet these criteria will be given priority.

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
Remnant ecological wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquisition, protection, and restoration of historic wetlands
Urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Montana cities with urban populations over 10,000 residents• Close proximity to urban core and residential areas
Community and Organizational Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative partnerships to support acquisition and long-term protection and stewardship
Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include public access and opportunities for recreation, interpretation, and education
Multiple Benefits/Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support multiple benefits and uses, including ecological, recreational, heritage, cultural, educational• Supports floodplain functions (flood abatement and storage) that protect human health and safety• Headwater wetlands that support baseflows of Montana's streams and rivers
Landscape Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhances/improves connections to larger protected lands
Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High value for restoration potential

More information

Information related to wetlands and wetlands management in Montana is available at the following websites:

- Montana DEQ Wetland Information Clearinghouse: <http://wetlands.mt.gov>
- Montana Wetland Council: <http://montanawetlandcouncil.pbworks.com/w/page/132750144/Montana%20Wetland%20Council>
- Montana Natural Heritage Program Wetland and Riparian Mapping Center: <http://mtnhp.org/nwi/>
- Montana Audubon: <http://www.mtaudubon.org/issues/wetlands/index.html>

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