

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

March 2005  
PACIFIC NORTHWEST  
REGION

## Teton River Canyon

### RMP Newsbrief

TETON RIVER CANYON  
*Resource Management Plan*

#### A Plan Begins

The Bureau of Reclamation is beginning a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Teton River Canyon, located in eastern Idaho. The purpose of the RMP is to define goals, objectives, and actions to guide natural and cultural resource management and use of Reclamation lands in and

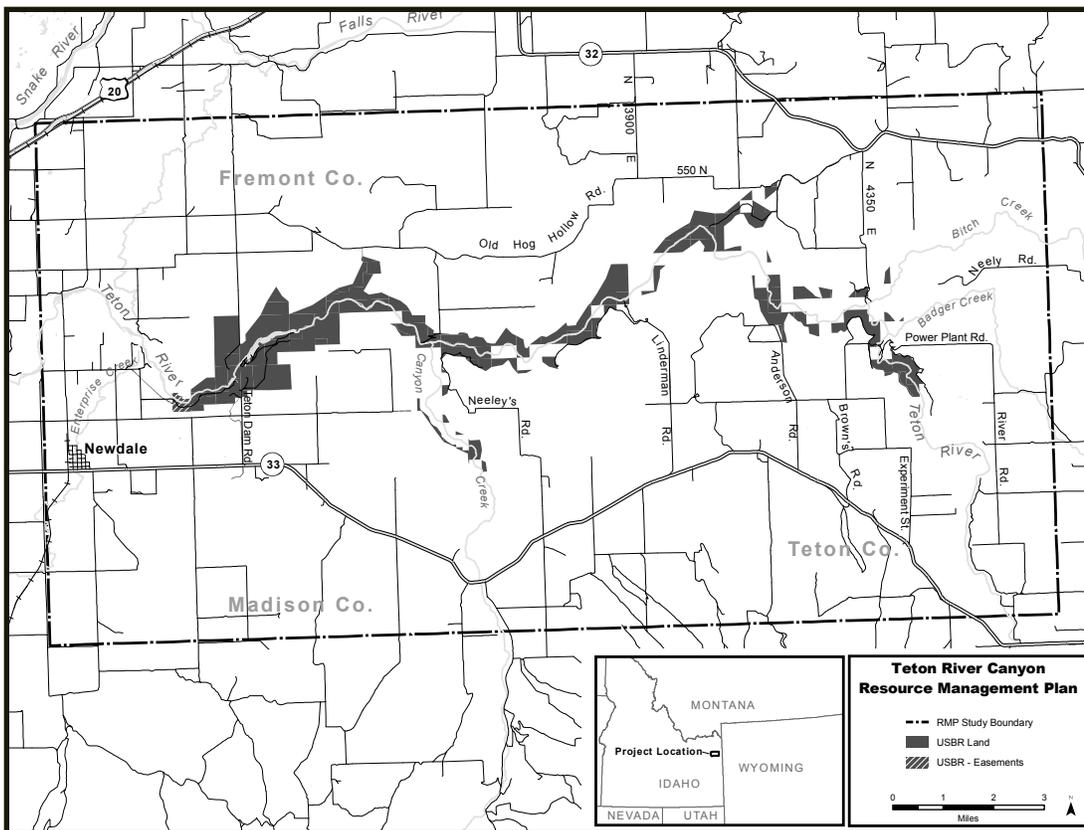
around the Teton River Canyon for the next 15 years.

Reclamation manages 5,840 acres along 22 miles of the Teton River within the RMP study area. These lands are located adjacent to and upstream of the Teton Dam site in the Teton River Canyon and along the rim in Fremont, Teton, and Madison Counties in eastern Idaho. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) also manages nearly 3,500 acres in the Teton Canyon.

Additionally, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has management responsibilities in the area. Reclamation will be coordinating with BLM and IDFG during the development of this plan.

#### A Look Back

In 1964, Congress authorized construction of Teton Dam. Reclamation acquired lands to build and operate the Teton Dam and



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Reservoir, which was to provide a supplemental water supply to more than 111,000 acres of land in the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District, local and downstream flood control benefits, water to operate a 16,000-kilowatt power plant, and recreation developments.

On June 5, 1976, the Teton Dam structure failed, resulting in the loss of 11 lives and \$400 million in property damage. The dam's failure also caused significant physical and biological changes within the Teton River Canyon. Since the dam's failure, a number of studies have been completed on water quality, fish populations, geomorphology, and vegetation recovery.

### Current Management

Although there are currently no plans to rebuild the dam, lands needed for project purposes must be retained by Reclamation as Congressional authorization still exists for the project. The Teton Dam site is also listed as a Protected Reservoir Site under the Idaho State Water Plan. Reclamation remains responsible for the natural and cultural resources in the study area as well the historic significance of the site. The RMP will provide management direction consistent with the authorized purposes of the Teton Basin Project, which include irrigation, recreation, and conservation and development of fish and wildlife resources.



Current management has included administering agricultural leases on Reclamation lands on the canyon rim; permitting commercial guided fishing trips on the river in cooperation with BLM; participating in noxious weed control efforts with BLM, IDFG, and local weed cooperatives; and supporting a number of scientific studies within the canyon.

### Future Visions

Reclamation does not anticipate being able to make major changes to the management of the Teton River Canyon due to budget realities, difficult access to the canyon, and the limitations of Reclamation's authority. There are, however, actions that can be taken to improve management of the canyon and fulfill Reclamation's stewardship responsibilities within the existing project purposes. The RMP can provide direction to limit degradation of natural and cultural resource values while still allowing for future unforeseen opportunities.

### Issues and Opportunities

The RMP will provide direction on the issues and opportunities listed below. Through public involvement and the planning process, we hope to learn more about issues and opportunities in this area.

- **Land Use**
  - *Agricultural leases*
  - *Easement and right-of-way agreements*
- **Recreation and Visual Quality**
  - *Commercial use permits*
  - *Boat access site management*
  - *Visual quality management*
  - *Wild and Scenic River's eligibility and suitability*
  - *Coordination with other agencies*



- **Habitat Management**
  - *Fish habitat*
  - *Wildlife habitat*
  - *Noxious weed management*
  - *Coordination with IDFG and BLM*
- **Interpretation, Education, and Information**
  - *Interpretive development and signage*
  - *Vandalism control*
  - *Historic site potential*

Topics **NOT** being considered in this RMP:

- Rebuilding the dam or de-authorizing the project
- Selling Reclamation land needed for project purposes or withdrawing additional lands

### Draft Goals

As part of the RMP planning process, goals, objectives, and management actions will be developed for Reclamation lands within the study area. Goals are usually general statements, while objectives are more specific, and management actions are site specific. Ultimately, an implementation plan will be developed to assign desired timelines for completing the management actions subject to budget authorization.

Draft goals have been developed for comment and are listed below. Please note that these preliminary goals are subject to change and are provided in the interest of encouraging public thought and comment.

- Provide comprehensive land use management based on a range of natural and socio-cultural resources.
- Achieve timely implementation and coordination of RMP programs and projects.
- Conserve, restore, and enhance natural ecosystems.
- Protect and preserve cultural resources, including prehistoric and historic-period archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties.
- Comply with requirements of Executive Order 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites).
- Protect Indian Trust Assets as specified in applicable Secretarial Orders.
- Provide for recreation use within authorities, to afford a quality recreation experience consistent with natural and cultural resource management objectives.
- Preserve and enhance existing scenic quality.
- Provide informational, educational, and interpretive messages through a variety of means to increase the public's awareness of opportunities, restrictions, safety, and natural and cultural resource values in the Teton River Canyon area.

## How You Can Be Involved

### 1) Get on the mailing list.

Newsbriefs such as this one will be mailed prior to public comment opportunities and public meetings. If you received this Newsbrief in the mail, you are already on the mailing list. To be added to the mailing list, contact Vicki Kellerman and provide your name and physical mailing address. Email: [vkellerman@pn.usbr.gov](mailto:vkellerman@pn.usbr.gov)  
Phone: (208) 378-5326  
Fax: (208) 378-5305

### 2) Attend public meetings.

A public meeting will be held in April 2005, in both Driggs and Rexburg, for project introduction and issue scoping. A second public meeting will be held when the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) is ready for public comment. Progress on the RMP and meeting dates will be announced in future Newsbriefs such as this one, on our website, and through announcements to the local news media.

### 3) Provide input during the comment periods.

Comments are taken at the start of the planning process (beginning now), and at the first public meeting to identify issues and opportunities. Use the form in this newsletter, or draft your own letter, and send to the address listed below by May 1, 2005.



There will be a 30-day comment period following the release of the Draft EA. Reclamation anticipates releasing the Draft EA in February of 2006.

### 4) Visit our website at [www.usbr.gov/pn](http://www.usbr.gov/pn).

Follow the links to Resource Management Plans – Teton River Canyon RMP. This site should be up by late March 2005.

## The Planning Team

The planning team will include an interdisciplinary team of Reclamation staff supported by an experienced team of contract staff with previous RMP experience. EDAW, Inc., with the help of CH2MHill, and John Petrovsky Associates, will be assisting Reclamation with this planning process. Meetings with the Tribes have begun and further meetings are planned to ensure that consultation and coordination responsibilities are met.

## Public Meetings

Consider attending one of the public meetings coming up in April to learn more about the Teton River Canyon RMP planning process and provide input on the issues and opportunities. Reclamation will be hosting public meetings in both Rexburg and Driggs to introduce the Teton RMP planning process and hear your comments on issues and opportunities in the RMP study area. You may also comment without attending the public meetings.





# Mail-in Response Form

**1. Please identify your top 3 concerns or desires for the Teton River Canyon RMP to address by entering 1, 2, or 3 in order of your highest priorities. Feel free to write in your own topics. Some topics do conflict with each other to allow for a range of preferences.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide for big game habitat                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate education opportunities          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve habitat for threatened and endangered species | <input type="checkbox"/> Protect cultural resources and sacred sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Control noxious weeds                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Protect Indian Trust Assets                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide for commercial recreation opportunities       | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve fishing                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a primitive recreation experience            | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve fish habitat                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep recreation use at current levels                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain water quality                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate increases in recreation use                | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve law enforcement                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve boat ramps                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Attempt to reduce vandalism                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Define parking areas to limit use                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain visual quality                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide for agricultural uses                         | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide interpretation on historic significance       | _____  |
|  | _____  |

**2. Other considerations for managing this area?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**3. Would you like to be on the mailing list for Newsbriefs such as this one? yes no**

Name and Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Know anyone else who would like to receive updates? \_\_\_\_\_

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**PLEASE SEND US YOUR COMMENTS BY MAY 1, 2005**

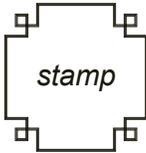
Fold this page in thirds and tape closed with Reclamation's address on the outside. Thanks for your comments!



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation



Four horizontal lines stacked vertically, serving as a form for an address or return information.



Vicki Kellerman PN-3906  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
PN Regional Office  
1150 N Curtis Road, Suite 100  
Boise, Idaho 83706-1234

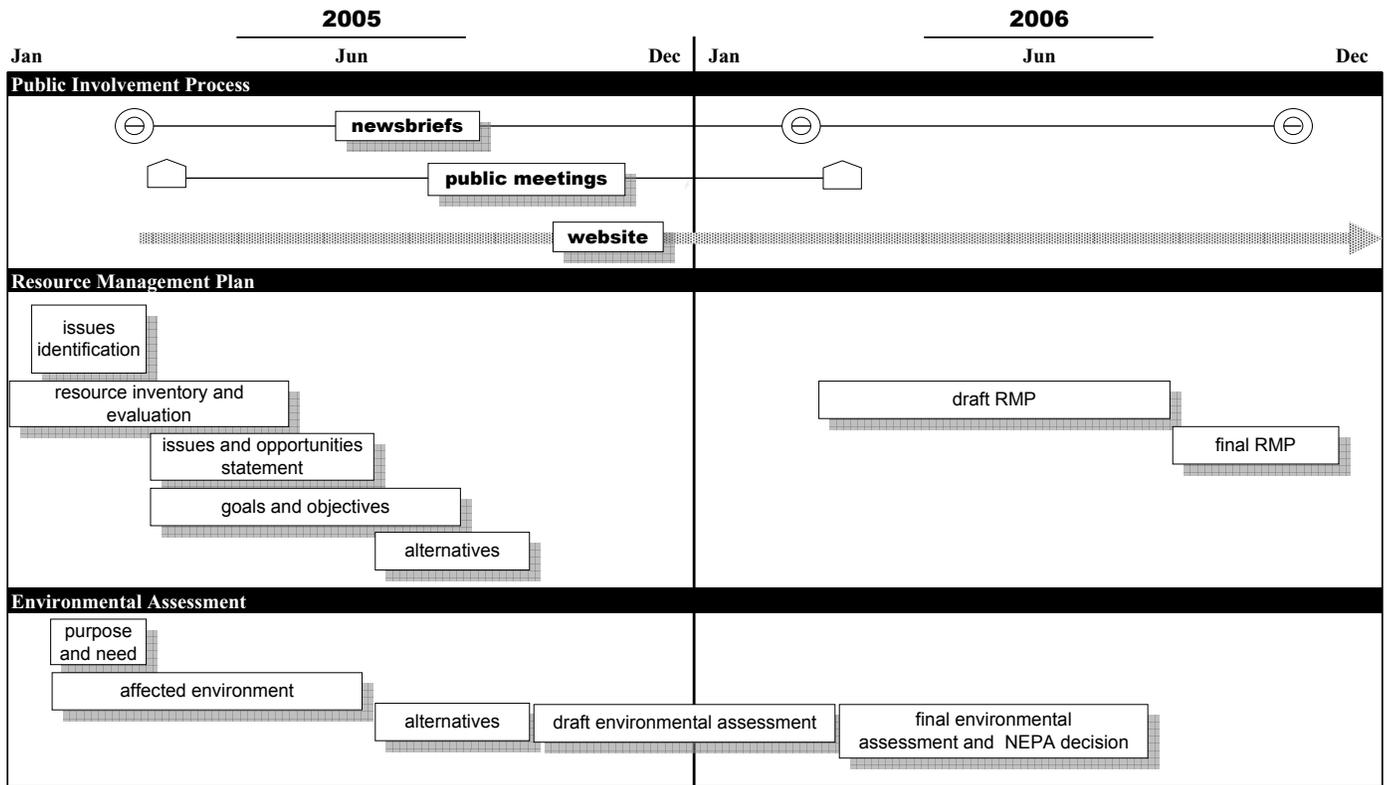
**Please attend one of the upcoming Public Meetings**

April 6, 2005  
 Best Western Cottontree Inn  
 450 W. 4th South  
 Rexburg, ID  
 7 pm to 9 pm

April 7, 2005  
 Super 8 Teton West  
 133 State Hwy 33  
 Driggs, ID  
 7 pm to 9 pm

These locations were selected in part because of the facilities' accessibility to people with disabilities as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Interested persons needing special assistance in this regard should contact Connie Wensman, Regional Office Accessibility Coordinator at (208) 378-5317 at least one week before the scheduled meeting so that arrangements can be made. TTYTDD # 1-800-833-6388.

**The Project Schedule** The planning process will run from Spring of 2005 to Winter of 2006.



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