

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

May 2019
Dakotas Area Office

Belle Fourche Reservoir Resource Management Plan

The Resource Management Plan for Belle Fourche Reservoir Continues!

For those of you who are new to our mailing list, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), in cooperation with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP), continues to work on the Belle Fourche Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP will serve as the blueprint for the future use, management and development of Belle Fourche Reservoir. This is the third newsletter regarding the Belle Fourche RMP. Newsletters are sent to provide information on the progress of the RMP.



(Above) Montana Youth Conservation Corps removing internal fencing at Belle Fourche Reservoir in August of 2018.

This newsletter provides the status of the RMP as well as development options for your review and comment. **The RMP will not address Belle Fourche Reservoir water operations or irrigation.**

RMP Update

Since the last newsletter in November 2018, the RMP team has reviewed all public comments and worked to incorporate them into proposed management options. According to the User Survey, of the 562 responses, 95% requested some additional facilities or services. Over half of the respondents desire additional campgrounds with electrical hookups, with most of the requests occurring at Gadens Point, Rocky Point, and Middle Point. Gadens Point also received the most responses for a boat ramp, shower house, hike and bike trails, potable water, fish cleaning station, camping cabins, dump/fill station, day use picnic shelters and playground equipment.

As discussed in previous newsletters; in accordance with Public Law (PL) 89-72 and Reclamations Recreation Management Policy, Reclamation has limited authority to provide these developments without a managing partner. The public identified a number of issues for all areas, so we understand there is a need for additional facilities to be developed inside Rocky Point or be expanded around Belle Fourche Reservoir.

Option Maps and an Option Selection Table are available electronically at:

<https://www.usbr.gov/gp/dkao/>



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Future Management Options

Draft options have been developed and the summaries of each are presented below. The options will be presented in more depth at the May 29 open house meeting for the Belle Fourche Reservoir RMP. From these options, Management Alternatives will be developed as part of an Environmental Assessment (EA) based on current and future public input. The Draft EA is anticipated to be available for public review in September of 2019. The RMP will be prepared based on the selected Alternative from the EA.



Option 1 - Minimum Recreation Development

Under this option, developments would be restricted to those allowed under PL 89-72 (minimum basic facility development) at recreation and wildlife areas, excluding current SDGFP managed areas.

Proposed Developments

Under PL 89-72, only minimum basic recreational facility development is allowed without a managing partner. Reclamation proposes to provide additional minimum basic facilities in the areas not currently administered by a managing partner. These additional minimum basic facilities and services include boat ramps, designated campsites, additional vault toilets and garbage dumpsters, picnic tables, additional fire rings, increased road maintenance, road construction, increased law enforcement, camping registration system and camp hosts.

Option 2 - Enhanced Recreation Development

Under this option, a managing partner would be necessary to provide additional recreational facilities and services; as requested by the public at all recreation areas. These improvements would be similar to existing modern facilities and services currently offered inside Rocky Point. While SDGFP is currently a managing partner for Rocky Point and the Game Production Area below Belle Fourche Dam, this option is not an indication of SDGFP's intent, ability or authorization to manage additional areas.

Proposed Developments

With the presence of a managing partner, enhanced recreation developments could include playground equipment, trails, improved shoreline fishing access, comfort stations, fish cleaning stations, dump station, picnic tables, day use areas with group shelters, water and utility hookups, in addition to the minimum basic facilities listed previously. A managing partner may collect entrance and user fees for services according to their respective authority.

Option 3 - Combined Option 1 & Option 2

The public will be able to select their development preference out of Options 1 and 2, by Management Unit, to form Option 3. A managing partner would be necessary for areas with Enhanced Recreation Development. If the public prefers Minimum Recreation Development, Reclamation would continue to manage those areas with management emphasis on resource protection and ensuring public health and safety.

Proposed Management Actions

Management actions to increase the public's health and safety and recreational experience, while reducing resource damage, have been recognized by Reclamation staff, managing partners, and the public. These actions will be proposed in the RMP. These management actions and justifications include:

1. **Camper self-registration stations**

Camper self-registration stations will be installed on Reclamation direct-managed areas. In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 423.62, the camper self-registration system will assist Reclamation in reducing overstay campers and unregistered/unlicensed camper units, as well as help gather visitation numbers, and provide law enforcement assistance.

2. **Designated campsites**

In an effort to reduce resource damage, altercations between campers, overstay campers, unregistered/unlicensed camper units, and assist with operation and maintenance endeavors; all campers will be required to camp in a designated campsite. This action is consistent with SDGFP management philosophy and will reduce confusion of multi-agency management.

3. **No shoreline driving or camping**

In the past, campers have followed the water and camped on the exposed shorelines as the Reservoir water levels recede throughout the summer. This has caused natural, cultural, and paleontological resource damage, and is in direct conflict with the law requiring all vehicles to remain on established roads. Currently all vehicles are restricted to authorized roads and this restriction will be enforced.

4. **Boat launching at designated boat ramps only**

Due to Aquatic Invasive Species concerns, and natural, cultural, and paleontological resource damage, all boats will be required to launch and retrieve from designated boat ramps. This requirement will be enforced after a third boat ramp is constructed on the Reservoir.

5. **Camp Host**

Under minimum basic authority, authorization exists for the placement of a camp host on Reclamation direct managed recreation areas. Camp hosts will be hired beginning in 2020. Camp hosts will be responsible for ensuring compliance with

rules and regulations, performing maintenance tasks, and assist Reclamation and law enforcement personnel in management and enforcement endeavors.

6. **Implementation of Fee Structure**

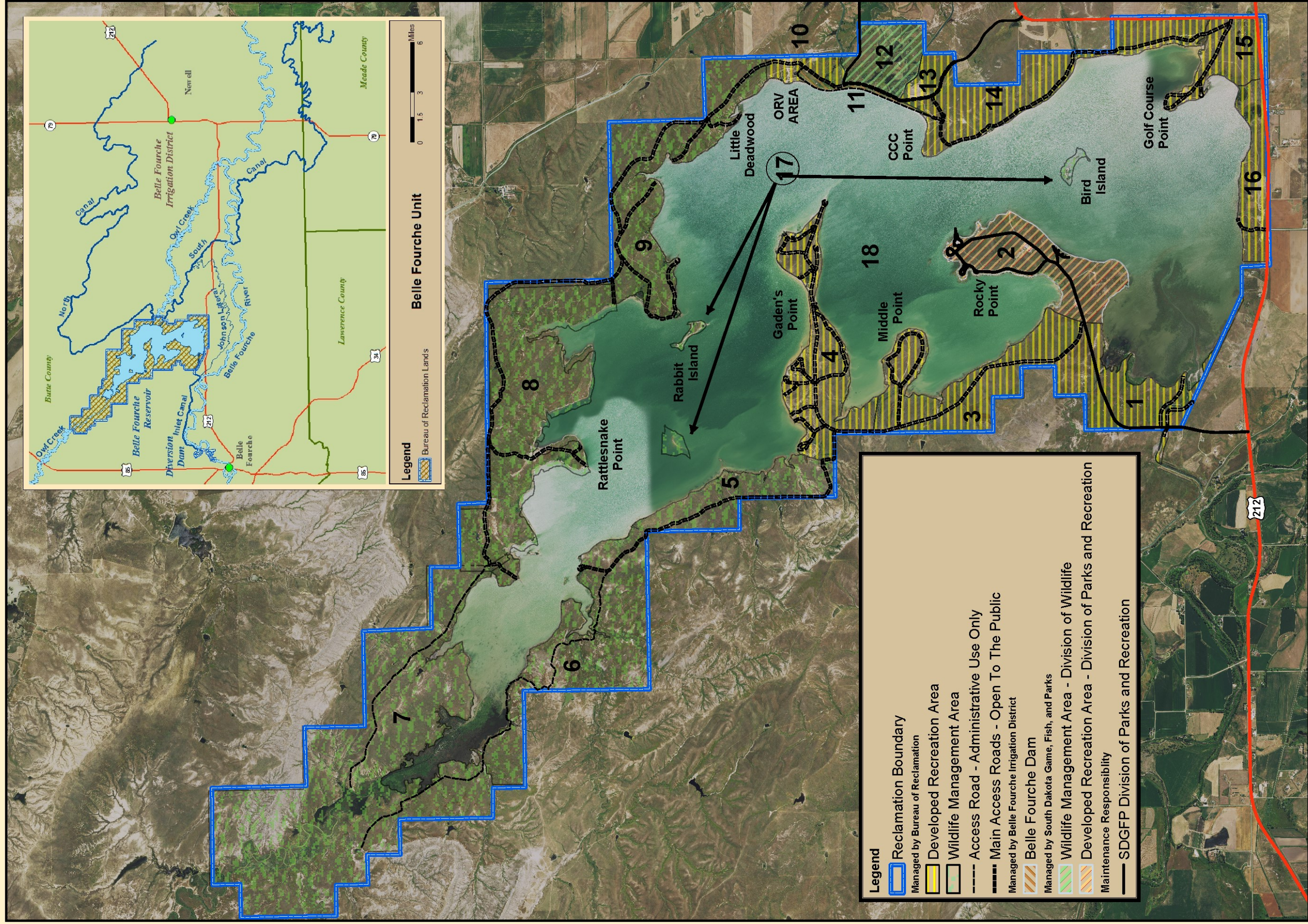
Reclamation has the authority to implement a fee structure. All proposed improvements will be costly and implemented on a phased approach as funding and resources are available. As improvements are furnished to the public, Reclamation will analyze the implementation of a possible future fee structure on recreation areas without a partner, to recoup a portion of the capital investment costs. Fees may be implemented on a phased approach and adjusted accordingly as facilities/services are added. Fees would follow a similar structure to those of SDGFP to reduce confusion of multi-agency management.



(Above) Designated camping sign.

Phased Development Strategy

The SDGFP is Reclamation's current managing partner at Belle Fourche Reservoir. Reclamation and the SDGFP currently utilize the Title 28 cost-sharing program to fund recreation and fish and wildlife improvements. This program allows Reclamation to pay for up to 50-percent of the cost of recreation improvement projects and up to 75-percent of the cost for fish and wildlife improvement projects. Reclamation, in conjunction with our current and future managing partner(s), will plan a phased strategic approach, including a five-year and ten-year development strategy to budget for the costs of additional facilities.



Belle Fourche Reservoir Land Management

2014 NAIP Aerial Photo

This map was prepared from the best available information and is subject to certain inaccuracies. Created by Bureau of Reclamation
Dakotas Area Office: August, 2018

Help Us Name Roads at Belle Fourche Reservoir

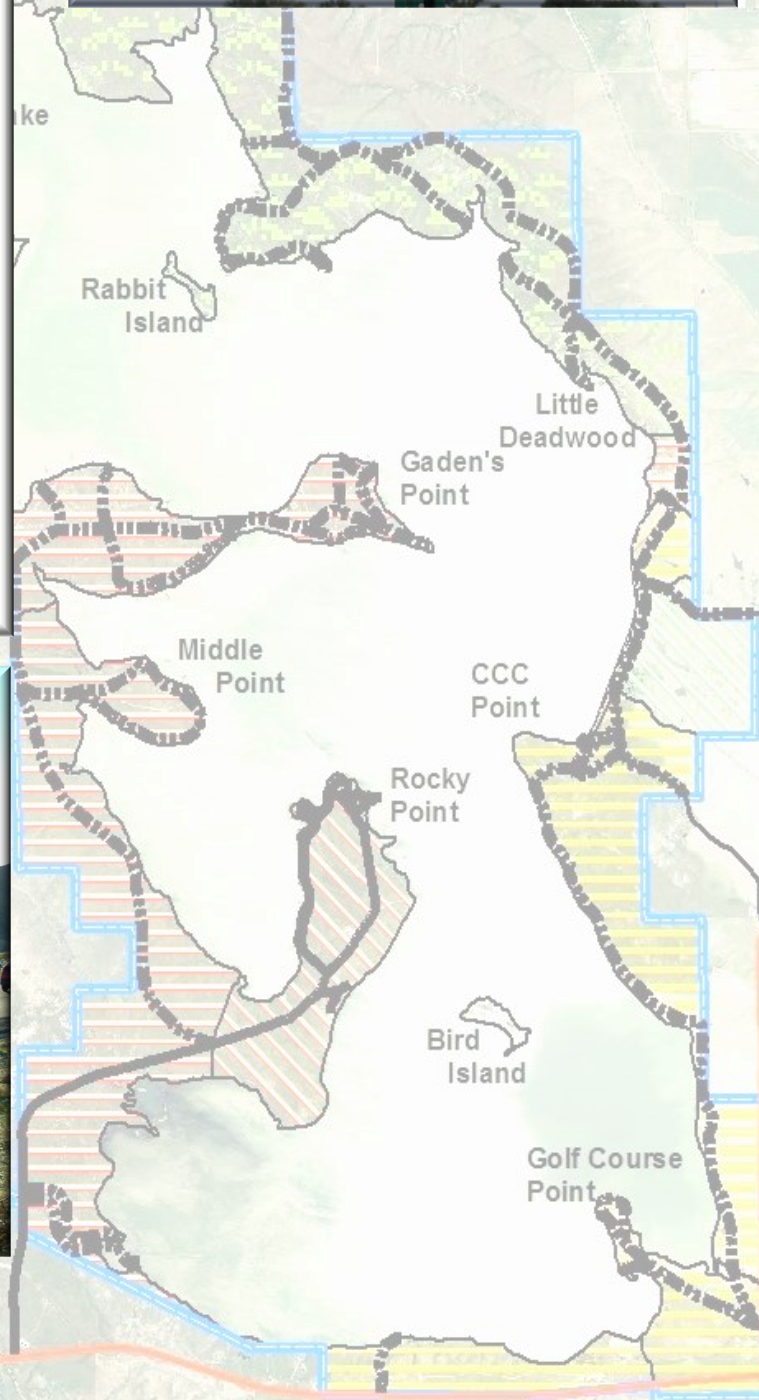
Reclamation and the SDGFP want the public's assistance in selecting names for the roads around Belle Fourche Reservoir.

For emergency response purposes and to aid law enforcement and the public, Reclamation is proposing to install green street signs at the intersection of all Reservoir roads. Certain roads are currently named and those names will remain the same; such as Fisherman's Road and Owl Creek Road. However there are many existing roads that have a local or unofficial name.

At the May 29 open house meeting, Reservoir maps with all the Reservoir roads identified will be available for viewing. You will have the opportunity to vote between the current name, proposed name, or write-in an option.

The intent of the write-in option is to let us know if a road is already unofficially known as something else – and for you to be part of the naming process.

Reclamation will announce the selected official names in the final RMP.



Resource Management Plan Schedule Update:



October 2018

Summarize user survey comments



November 2018

Distribution of 2nd Newsletter



December 2018

Develop management options



May 2019

Distribution of 3rd Newsletter with management options



2nd Open House Meeting to deliver management options to public



June 15, 2019

Management Options comment period ends



September 2019

Draft EA completed. Make publicly available for review



October 2019

End of EA 30-day comment period



November 2019

Final RMP completed and distributed to the public

How to Stay Involved

Although the initial public scoping concluded in October 2018, Reclamation and SDGFP encourage everyone to stay involved in the RMP process by providing comments and suggestions to the addresses below. The next phase of the RMP process will be considering public comments on the draft management options. The public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft management options online or at the open house meeting scheduled for May 29, 2019. See timeline to the left.

Please send additional comments or suggestions to:

Jay Leasure
Bureau of Reclamation
515 Ninth Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
Email: jleasure@usbr.gov
Phone: 605-519-5504

Brad Nelson
South Dakota Game Fish & Parks
18513 Fisherman's Road
Belle Fourche, SD 57717
Email: Brad.Nelson@state.sd.us
Phone: 605-641-0023

Reminder

Open House Meeting

An informal open house meeting for the Belle Fourche Reservoir RMP:

- ⇒ **Wednesday May 29, 2019**
- ⇒ **5:00 - 8:00 p.m. MDT**
- ⇒ **Belle Fourche Community Hall**
512 6th Ave, Belle Fourche, SD

An aerial photograph of a large body of water, likely a reservoir or lake, with a line of white RVs parked along a grassy shoreline. The water is a deep blue-green color. The sky is clear and blue. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

JAY LEAUSRE - BELLE FOURCHE RMP
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
515 9TH STREET
RAPID CITY, SD 57701

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Please fold, staple, stamp, and mail