

Canyon Ferry Reservoir

Lands and Recreation News



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

May 2022



Fish Hawk Campground

On February 17, 2022, a press release was issued by the Bureau of Reclamation notifying the public that Fish Hawk Campground is temporarily closed due to misuse and abuse. The public misuse and abuse included the dumping of large amounts of garbage within the recreation area.



Fish Hawk will reopen in the Spring of 2022 as a newly redefined day use area. Fish Hawk Day Use Area will be managed like the other day use areas along West Shore Drive and in accordance with 43 CFR Part 423 and 43 CFR Part 429. All recreation areas have posted rules and regulations, day use areas close at 10:00 PM. If you have questions regarding the change, contact the Canyon Ferry Field Office at (406) 475-3310.

Private Exclusive Use

Reclamation policy prohibits exclusive uses unless directed otherwise in the Canyon Ferry Act or 43 CFR Part 429.31 and 429.32. Private exclusive recreational or residential use means any use that involves structures, lands, or other improvements on Reclamation administered Federal land that is used for recreational or residential purposes to the exclusion of public uses and is not associated with the official management of a Reclamation project. Exclusive use includes, but is not limited to, boat docks, boat ramps, cabins, trailers, manufactured or mobile homes, structures, roads, or other amenities determined by Reclamation to be exclusive use.

Cabin sites at Canyon Ferry are exempt from this policy due to the passing of the Canyon Ferry Act of 1998. Each cabin site has perpetual easements for vehicular access to each property, access to and use of one dock per property, access to and use of all existing boathouses, ramps, retaining walls, and other improvements for which access is provided in the leases as of the date of enactment of the Act. Other improvements and repairs are not allowed if they are determined to be private exclusive use. However, if work on Federal land is needed, a Special Use/Right of Use Permit request needs to be submitted.

Special Use Permits

The Bureau of Reclamation provides Special Use/Right

of Use permits for any activity that goes beyond typical recreation activities. All ground disturbing activities must be permitted by Reclamation. The public may request to use Reclamation land, facilities, and waterbodies, and may engage in the use only after proper authorization is received from Reclamation.

Some examples of Special Use Permits include but are not limited to events such as:

- Private events
- Carp Shoots
- Scouting, Military Use
- Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP) Pines for Perch, and search and rescue training.

Other types of permits may be issued for shoreline stabilization, storage of construction equipment and supplies, road use, etc.

Submission of an application for use does not constitute authority to use Reclamation land, facilities, or waterbodies. Consideration of applications to use Reclamation land, facilities, or waterbodies is completely discretionary and Reclamation reserves the right to refuse to authorize any use which may be incompatible with Reclamation authority and/or interferes with Reclamation's rights and/or operations.

To apply for a use permit, contact Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Field Office. Permit application information can be found online at

www.usbr.gov/gp/mtao/canyonferry/. Complete form 7-254 and submit it to the Canyon Ferry Field Office, along with a \$100 non-refundable application fee. Include all necessary details, photos, maps, drawings, dimensions, type of equipment, etc. After an initial review of your application, Reclamation will provide an initial estimate of administrative costs to be paid by the applicant. Fees are dependent on the size and complexity of the project and how much time staff must put into the permit. Reclamation is also required under Federal law to collect, in advance, adequate funds to cover all administrative costs associated with the use application, including, but not limited to, environmental compliance, contract negotiation, processing, cultural surveys, management review, waiver valuation, employee time, construction overview, oversight, etc. Receiving a permit may take two - six months and can be longer if the project is complex and Reclamation workloads are high.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Lewis and Clark Conservation District also require permits for

projects below the high-water mark. Please check with them directly regarding permit requests. Please be aware the permits issued by Reclamation and the Army Corps do have expiration dates, usually 5 years. Because you were given a permit to do a project, does not mean you can continue to indefinitely do work, store equipment, make repairs, etc.

Cabin Sites

Cabin site owners must obtain authorization or permits from Reclamation prior to doing any new construction or repair work to existing structures on Reclamation lands, including access across Reclamation lands. This also includes permission from Reclamation to have a dock. All docks must meet the guidelines found in the Canyon Ferry Shoreline Management Plan of 2012. The storing of personal property on Reclamation managed lands is not allowed. This includes, but not limited to, vehicles, trailers, watercraft, and construction materials.

New cabin site owners are encouraged to contact the Canyon Ferry Field Office to learn more about what is allowed and not allowed on Reclamation property.

If you plan to do any type of work on Reclamation property, contact the Canyon Ferry Field Office at (406) 475-3310 well in advance of your need to construct the project/task.

Off-Highway Vehicles

Any off-highway vehicles such as All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs), cars, trucks, and motorcycles are not allowed to drive off road at Canyon Ferry. The vehicles are only allowed on public roads, must be licensed, and street legal. Only licensed drivers may operate these vehicles.



Canyon Ferry has been restoring these off-highway vehicle trails. Reclamation has not had to restore any new

or existing restoration work since the spring of 2020. Several new trails were identified and signed or fenced at Goose Bay and Confederate at that time. Reclamation's boundary fence is continually monitored and addressed as time permits.

Recreation

Help Wanted

Helena, Montana - Bureau of Reclamation - Canyon Ferry Reservoir is seeking volunteer campground hosts to serve as liaisons between campground visitors and Reclamation. Hosts are responsible for greeting and assisting campers, stocking and cleaning restrooms, campground cleaning, emptying fire rings, picking up litter and maintaining the camping reservation system via Recreation.gov.

Hosts are provided with a full hookup campsite, per diem, and on-site mileage. For further information, please contact the Canyon Ferry Field Office at (406) 475-3310 or see Reclamation's Canyon Ferry website at www.usbr.gov/gp/mtao/canyonferry/ for more information.

Campsite Improvements



Reclamation continues to make enhancements to recreation areas providing a safe and enjoyable experience at the facilities. Several campsites around Canyon Ferry continued to be upgraded with new concrete picnic tables and fire rings on concrete pads.



Beginning this year, the Bureau of Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Field Office are in the process of becoming part of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA). This act allows federal agencies to collect and retain recreation user fees for overnight camping, group use shelters, and special use permits.



When FLREA is instituted at Canyon Ferry Reservoir, fees collected from the recreation facilities will stay at Canyon Ferry and be used exclusively for improvements within Canyon Ferry's recreation facilities instead of returning the fees to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The current fees for campgrounds and group use shelters at Canyon Ferry will not be increased, and no additional fees will be added, at this time.

Additional improvements have been made to the Shannon Boat Launch and Silos Campground. The boat ramp at Shannon Boat Launch was improved by squaring off the bottom edge of the main ramp and widened by 13 feet on the east side of the ramp allowing users to access both sides of the dock when launching and retrieving boats.

Broadwater County completed the excavation of the boat channel at Broadwater Bay. The original excavation began in 2005 but was stopped due to equipment battling the rising water in the lake. With low water levels in Canyon Ferry this spring, the excavation to remove the remaining material in the channel was completed on April 9th. The project was funded by the Broadwater County Trust Fund along with other partners that made significant donations towards getting this project completed. This project was spearheaded by the Citizens Action Group for the Silos Recreation Area, and they were instrumental in the fundraising efforts.

Canyon Enterprises Inc, Broadwater County's site manager, has completed repairs to the rental and courtesy dock in Broadwater Bay, freshened up the Silos campground sites, installed signage at Silos Campground.

The main parking area for Broadwater Bay boat ramp will be leveled this spring with additional gravel, reshaping the entrance road and a fresh dust abatement treatment of Mag-chloride.

Campground and Group Shelter Reservations



The 2021 recreation season was again impacted by COVID-19 but set new visitation records. Reclamation will continue to use same-day online reservations through Recreation.gov for the 2022 season. The 2022 recreation season will collect user fees from May 6th to September 11th. Reservations can be made up to six months prior to the date of use. All fees at all the recreation sites are by reservation only through Recreation.gov, no cash or check payment are allowed at the sites. By using Recreation.gov we have reduced user conflicts and noticed an increase in fees collected.

Finding a campsite to reserve or reserving a group shelter can easily be done using a computer, mobile phone or other device. Be sure to download and use the **Recreation.gov** website or mobile app as follows:

1. Login into **Recreation.gov**
2. In the search bar – Search the recreation site you want (i.e., Canyon Ferry).
3. Review the facilities information provided
4. Select - View by Availability - Search & select the dates available
5. Select - Book Now – Follow prompts and check out

After making a reservation, you will receive an email confirmation receipt. This receipt is used to confirm your reserved site and date of use.

Know the Rules

While visiting the recreation facilities at Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Reclamation wants to remind

everyone that campground and day-use area rules and regulations have been established under 43 CFR Part 423. These rules are to ensure everyone visiting Canyon Ferry Reservoir will have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Abandoned property left unattended for more than 24 hours continues to be an issue. Reclamation has been working with the U.S. Forest Service to address the 14 day stay limit and abandoned RVs, boats and other personal property. The U.S. Forest Service has issued citations and we have had numerous vehicles towed. Other law enforcement is being conducted by Lewis and Clark and Broadwater County Sheriff's department. Another continual enforcement issue deals with dogs off leash. This sounds like a minor issue until a dog is hit by a vehicle or bites someone or another animal.

Rules and regulations can be located on kiosks throughout the Canyon Ferry facilities or online by looking up 43 CFR Part 423. Please call the Canyon Ferry Field Office at (406) 475-3310 with any questions.

Due to inclement weather in the winter and spring, campgrounds may be closed to vehicular access, but foot traffic will still be allowed.

Water levels and Courtesy Docks

According to the early April forecast, the snow water equivalent in the Missouri headwaters was 77% of normal. Along with streamflow and climate data, it is projected that the April to July runoff inflow into Canyon Ferry Lake will be 59% of average. The most probably inflow conditions lead to a reservoir surface elevation of 3790 feet being reached this year, which is approximately 7 feet below full pool. Releases are currently at minimum fishery flows.

Courtesy docks will be installed and taken out at the following reservoir elevations:

- Hellgate 3787 feet
- Shannon 3788 feet
- White Earth 3789 feet
- Jo Bonner 3791 feet

To find current reservoir elevations please visit www.usbr.gov/gp/mtao/canyonferry and go to water operations, then hydromet information.

Power Plant

Reclamation is initiating major rehabilitation over the next several years to modernize and improve the efficiencies of generators at the plant. In addition to the major rehabilitation of the generators and turbines, the following projects have been completed or will be conducted over the next year.

The following have been completed:

- Helena Valley Irrigation fixed wheel gated was pulled and rehabbed to stop leakage around the gate.
- Rehabilitation of the bridge crane controls, lifting system and brakes have been completed

The following are projects proposed for construction this year:

- Gantry Crane Rehab Project - Replace all motors and controls with variable frequency drives. Approximate start time is June 2022, and it will take about 3 months to completed.
- River Outlet Works Testing: Conducted to determine maximum flow that can be achieved prior to increasing the amount of maintenance in the stilling basin, is planned for early June 2022.
- River Outlet Gate Rehabilitation: The last of four river outlet gates is scheduled to be rehabilitated in the Fall of 2022. This may cause some traffic delays on the dam roadway.
- Switchyard Circuit Breaker Replacement – Removal of existing oil filled circuit breakers from the powerplant rooftop switchyard and replace with new SF6 gas cooled circuit breakers. Project underway. Scheduled to finish June 2022.
- Powerplant Generator Rewind - Complete refurbishment of the three generators will start in July or August 2022 and take about three to four years to completed finish in July 2025

Normal operations, preventive maintenance and corrective maintenance will be conducted throughout the year. This may result in seeing activities in and around the dam road, spillway and penstock gates, gantry crane and the buoy line upstream of the dam as well as work upstream of the cable below the dam. There are no expected impacts on operations, but there may be closures crossing the dam road intermittently and for short durations to work on equipment. If this is conducted, information releases will take place to notify the public. If you see anything suspicious in and around the dam, powerplant or any Canyon



Ferry facility, please contact Reclamation's Canyon Ferry Office at (406) 475-3310.

Special Thanks

Canyon Ferry couldn't accomplish our goals without the help of our partners and contractors, as well as Reclamation employees and management.

We would especially like to thank:

**U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
Broadwater County Commissioners
Broadwater County Trust Fund
Broadwater County Sheriff's Office
Townsend Chamber of Commerce
Campground Hosts
Canyon Ferry Homeowners Association
U.S. Forest Service
Goose Bay Marina and Campground
Helena Valley and Toston Irrigation Districts
Kim's Marina and Campground
Lewis and Clark Conservation District
Lewis and Clark Sheriff's Office
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
Silos Citizens Action Group
Walleyes unlimited
Yacht Basin Marina
Other State and Local Agencies**



Please contact the Canyon Ferry Field office if you need additional information.

Canyon Ferry Field Division	(406) 475-3310
Facility Manager	(406) 475-3923
Assistant Facility Manager	(406) 475-3922
Recreation Clerk	(406) 465-3920
Outdoor Recreation Planner	(406) 475-3925
Recreation Shop	(406) 475-3926