

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 Executive Summary

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has prepared this Resource Management Plan (RMP) to provide prescribed guidance for management of natural and recreational resources, facilities, and access on Reclamation lands and waters surrounding Clark Canyon Reservoir and at Barrett's Diversion Dam in Beaverhead County, Montana. Clark Canyon Reservoir is situated alongside Interstate 15 approximately 18 miles south of Dillon, Montana. The RMP identifies goals and objectives for natural and recreation resource management, specifies desired land and resource patterns, and explains the policies and actions that will be implemented during the life of the plan to achieve those goals and objectives. **The RMP does not consider modifying reservoir operations.**

Clark Canyon Reservoir has a water surface area ranging from 4,500 acres at a typical low pool to over 5,900 acres at full pool that can be realized after wet winters with high spring runoff. The RMP is a land resource management plan focusing on how to best manage the 4,350-acres of Reclamation lands adjoining the reservoir and 38 acres of Reclamation land at Barrett's Diversion Dam, located 10 miles downstream of the reservoir. There are 11 developed recreation sites including 11 campground facilities around the reservoir and at Barretts Diversion Dam. These facilities attract approximately 57,000 visitors annually. Other than nearby foraging bald eagles, there are no other known occurrences of Federally listed Endangered or Threatened species at the project. Similar to most valleys in Beaverhead County there is however, a continuing problem with noxious weeds.

Development of the RMP began with a pre-planning process that included a recreation conditions assessment to establish current conditions for recreation use and facilities. That analysis culminated in a 2002 report; Recreation Management Condition Assessment. To solicit direct input from the public, agencies and other interested parties, Reclamation conducted a scoping process in fall of 2002 that included public meetings in Idaho Falls, Idaho, Dillon and Butte, Montana. Based on input gained from the scoping process along with the previous analyses, a series of alternative management and improvement measures were identified and evaluated in an Environmental Assessment that accompanies this draft RMP. The alternatives included No-action, representing a continuation of current management practices, moderate natural and recreation resource development that provides some improvements to most facilities around the reservoir, and a maximum resource development alternative that would bring all facilities up to current standards representing a close-to-build-out condition for the current facilities. As an outcome of the RMP analysis process and the Environmental Assessment, a single alternative, the Moderate natural and recreation Resource Development alternative was chosen to carry through the RMP based on several factors including demonstrated need, extent, type, and intensity of likely environmental and socioeconomic effects. During the development of the RMP, Reclamation hired the University of Montanan to conduct a visitor use survey. The survey obtained information on demographics, trip characteristics, and satisfaction about facilities, and whether there were conflicts or overcrowding. Data obtained in this survey were consistent with the data obtained at scoping meetings and alternatives studied in the RMP and EA. An Executive Summary of the results is included in Appendix A.

The RMP plan provides for a systematic level of site improvements at maintenance level quality across most existing developed facilities that are consistent with existing authorities demand, available funding, and carrying capacity of the resource base. Several sites would receive upgrades in the form of accessibility improvements that help bring facilities into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide improved access to all types of users. Parking spaces and travel routes would be better managed at several sites. At some locations informal, user made roads would be closed (Sacajewea Day Use Area and Cameahwait campgrounds). At other locations parking lots would be delineated to provide more accommodations at peak times and lessen vegetative damage (Horse Prairie Campground and Buffalo Bridge Fishing Access). At Lone Tree Campground there would be improvements to the water supply facilities and new toilets would be added. New toilet facilities would also be added at Red Rock Fishing Access and Sacajewea Day Use Area. Environmental considerations include measures to reduce levels of ongoing erosion along portions of lower Horse Prairie Creek as well as adding additional jack-leg fencing at Horse Prairie Campground. Reclamation would continue to seek out a concessionaire to operate the marina facility while improving the facility by adding more shade trees and improving the water supply system.

For the open land resources outside of designated recreation areas, Reclamation would consider prescribed grazing for certain lands in the Horse Prairie Creek mouth to help revitalize the health of native vegetation and slow the ongoing spread of noxious weeds. Cottonwoods and willow trees would be planted to help maintain plant diversity in the riparian areas. Additional controls for noxious weeds would be taken along the abandoned railroad grade along in the Red Rock River area and fencing and signs would be added to other surrounding lands to exclude ORV uses. Sections of fence along the South Side Open lands would be replaced with more open fences friendly to antelope migration to improve access for this species.

Lastly, periodic monitoring will occur to provide periodic checks on the successes and outcomes of all management measures. The RMP plan is contemplated for a 10-year period and is designed to provide consistent planning direction to help coordinate land management activities with adjoining land owners and land management agencies.