
**Clark Canyon Draft Resource Management Plan
for Clark Canyon Reservoir and Barretts Diversion Dam**

Chapter 1
Introduction and Background

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 Mountain 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.

1.2 Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has prepared this Resource Management Plan (RMP) to provide prescribed guidance for management of resources, facilities, and access on Reclamation lands and waters surrounding Clark Canyon Reservoir and at Barretts Diversion Dam in Beaverhead County, Montana (Figure 1-1). This document is a draft RMP that is being circulated for public and agency review and comment. Following the receipt of public and agency input, Reclamation will finalize this document. Pending the completion of the associated environmental assessment and the signing of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), will adopt and implement this RMP.

Chapter 1 of the RMP provides the background and context for the plan. Chapter 2 presents detailed descriptions of existing resources and resource conditions at Clark Canyon Reservoir and Barretts Diversion Dam. Chapter 3 provides a summary of the constraints and opportunities associated with future uses, management and planning for the lands. Chapter 4 presents the proposed plan with a summary of its development and both specific and overall measures that provide planning direction for the lands over the 10-year planning period. Chapter 5 describes implementation measures and the types of monitoring that should be undertaken to determine if the plan and its measures are successfully, or are bringing about the desired changes or outcomes. Lastly, the final sections of this RMP provide additional references and other materials to support future management decisions for the lands of Clark Canyon Reservoir and Barretts Diversion Dam.

1.3 Policies and Resource Management Plan Framework

Reclamation's mission statement is "to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public" (Reclamation 2003). According to Reclamation's *2000-2005 Strategic Plan*, an RMP is to provide management direction consistent with authorized purposes while recognizing the rights and interests of existing contracts, legislation, and other entities concerning an identified land area that is under the jurisdiction of Reclamation. Recreation, Fish, and Wildlife are not authorized project purposes. They are indirect benefits of the project. Under P.L. 89-72, recreation is managed for minimum and basic facilities.

1.4 Need for Resource Management Plan



The RMP is intended to guide the future use, management, and site development of the lands around Clark Canyon Reservoir managed by Reclamation. Reclamation has the responsibility to manage its projects to meet its legal and contractual obligations, for the benefit of the public, and to protect natural, cultural, and recreational resources of those lands. An RMP identifies goals and objectives for 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.

This RMP is a management tool for Reclamation, and other possible managing agencies, that outline resources, policies, and actions that will guide the agency over the 10-year life of the plan. Preparation of the RMP is specifically authorized in Title 28, Section 2805 (C) of Public Law 102-575.

In an August 2002, Reclamation conducted a Recreation Management Condition Assessment (Assessment Report) for Clark Canyon Reservoir and Barretts Diversion Dam. The Assessment Report found that these facilities are not utilized to their full recreation potential; therefore opportunities exist to provide additional or improved recreation opportunities and experiences to meet existing and future public recreation needs. The bicentennial celebration of the Lewis and Clark expedition, which is anticipated to bring thousands of new visitors to the area during the next five years, provide additional need for Reclamation to evaluate the adequacy of the current facilities, and implement an RMP that considers the likely increase in visitation.

1.5 Purpose and Scope of the Plan

The Clark Canyon Reservoir RMP is a 10-year plan to provide management direction for lands and recreational facilities under Reclamation jurisdiction at Clark Canyon Reservoir and Barretts Diversion Dam. The project includes land around Clark Canyon Reservoir and Barretts Diversion Dam, 10 river miles downstream of the reservoir. As previously stated, the purpose of the RMP is to address current and anticipated future issues to allow for orderly and coordinated development and management of lands and recreation facilities under Reclamation jurisdiction and authorities within the project area. Reclamation's broad goal for the RMP is to manage, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, natural resources, cultural resources, and recreation resources in a manner that is aesthetically pleasing and environmentally sound.

This RMP does not consider modifying reservoir levels or river outlet releases or water operations or address fisheries. Rather, the RMP is a land resource management plan focusing on how best to manage the lands and associated resources in a manner that is compatible and adaptable to the reservoir operations and its annually fluctuating water levels.

Through implementation of the RMP, Reclamation aims to balance competing and conflicting demands for differing uses of the land and maximize recreation and related activities compatible with surrounding land uses, while affording an appropriate level of resource protection and enhancement. Reclamation also intends to use this plan as a tool to seek out new managing partners for assistance in funding and operating recreation facilities and wildlife habitat areas.

1.6 NEPA Compliance Requirements

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires Reclamation to explore a range of possible alternative management approaches and the environmental effects of these actions. In conjunction with the preparation of this RMP, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared by Reclamation. The EA evaluates and compares three alternative management strategies: a moderate-level alternative (which is the proposed plan, as presented in Chapter 4 of this document), a high-level alternative, and a no action alternative. The impacts of each alternative are evaluated in the EA to identify potential impacts to resources including: water quality, soils, wetlands, vegetation,

biological resources, recreation, transportation and access, air quality, land use, noise, visual, cultural resources (including sacred sites and Indian Trust Assets), and socioeconomic conditions.

Where resource impacts are identified, the EA also recommends mitigation measures that serve to reduce or avoid potential adverse impacts. When appropriate, Reclamation has adopted such mitigation measures for inclusion in the RMP. Chapters 4 and 5 of this RMP discuss the RMP elements and identify mitigation measures that are also incorporated as elements of the RMP.

1.7 Locations and Description of the Management Area

Clark Canyon Reservoir is located in Beaverhead County in southwestern Montana. (See Location and Site map in front of document). The Clark Canyon Reservoir, which receives inflow from Red Rock River and Horse Prairie Creek, are the headwaters of the Beaverhead River. The project area includes Clark Canyon Reservoir and Barretts Diversion Dam, 11 river miles downstream of the reservoir. Clark Canyon Reservoir is situated alongside I-15 approximately 19 miles south of Dillon, Montana. Dillon, Montana is the county seat of Beaverhead County with a year 2000 population of 3,752 persons. The City of Idaho Falls, Idaho is 140 miles to the south and Butte, Montana is 85 miles to the north. Clark Canyon Reservoir has a storage capacity of 325,324 acre-feet of water with a normal pool capacity of 124,160 acre-feet that creates 5,903 acres of water surface area. The East Bench Irrigation District operates and maintains the dam, diversion facilities, and associated outlet works.

There are approximately 4,350 acres of Reclamation lands adjoining the reservoir surrounded by lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the State of Montana, and by private parties, with most of the surrounding lands used for ranching. The project lands around the reservoir, dam, and outlet structure facilities are currently managed for recreation, preservation of cultural resources, and wildlife habitat enhancement. The Barretts Diversion Dam, located just outside Dillon, Montana is situated on 38 acres of Reclamation lands and is managed for recreation use, cultural resources protection, and project-related uses.

1.8 Project History and Background

Clark Canyon Reservoir was developed in the 1960s as a part of the East Bench Unit of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944. The Project lands were originally acquired for the construction and maintenance of irrigation works and other purposes. Recreation and fish and wildlife were not authorized in the project legislation as an authorized purpose but are a secondary benefit of the project. The total area under Reclamation jurisdiction at Clark Canyon Reservoir consists of 5,903 water surface acres and 4,350 acres land surface acres immediately adjacent to Clark Canyon Reservoir. (These averages are for when the reservoir is at a “normal pool” elevation of 5536 feet above mean sea level [msl]) In addition, there are approximately 38 acres available for public use at Barretts Diversion Dam. This Recreation Management Condition Assessment dealt primarily with assessing the current recreation conditions. It identified existing issues and concerns related to recreation management. Possible development alternatives, constraints and opportunities were identified. This Report served as the foundation for formulating many of the RMP and Environmental Assessment (EA) recommendations and reference material.

Prior to 1978 the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) managed the recreation and wildlife resources at Clark Canyon Reservoir but since that time Reclamation has managed these resources through its limited authority under Public Law 89-72. Under Public Law 89-72, Reclamation is authorized to provide only minimum basic facilities (which at Clark Canyon Reservoir consists of general maintenance of existing facilities).

Construction of Clark Canyon Dam was started in 1961 and completed in 1964 as an earth filled structure. Clark Canyon Dam was authorized as part of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, East Bench Unit. Horse Prairie Creek and Red Rock River provide the water used for storage in the reservoir. There are three direct benefits associated with Clark Canyon Dam. The first and most important direct benefit is: water supply for increased irrigated land, which results in an increase of net farm income and in agricultural production. Operation of the reservoir is controlled by a contract to deliver the necessary water to the irrigated land. Second, Clark Canyon reservoir provides extensive flood control on the Beaverhead River. Third, the reservoir provides extensive recreational opportunities, even though recreation is not an authorized project purpose. The recreational opportunities are dependant on the water level of the reservoir, which fluctuates depending on precipitation. Since recreation was not authorized, there is no storage reserved to provide recreational opportunities. The capacity of the reservoir is 257,152 acre-ft. The surface area of the reservoir at capacity covers 5,903 acres. The length of the crest is 2,050 ft. The height of the dam is 147.5 ft.

Another feature of the East Bench Unit is Barretts Diversion Dam. The diversion is used to feed the East Bench Canal and the Canyon Canal. These canals provide water for 28,000 acres of irrigated farmland in Madison and Beaverhead Counties. Excess water from the canals and return flows return to the Beaverhead River.

After construction of the dam, operation and maintenance of the recreational facilities surrounding the reservoir was conducted by MFWP through a management agreement with Reclamation. Improvements were made under the direction of MFWP from 1964 until 1978. In 1978, MFWP returned management of the recreation areas back to Reclamation. Since then, existing facilities have been operated and maintained by Reclamation through limited authority under Public Law 89-72. Other than replacement of antiquated facilities, no new recreation facilities have been constructed since mid-1970.



One important aspect of the Clark Canyon Reservoir and Barretts Diversion location are that they are closely associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806. Camp Fortunate, presently inundated beneath the reservoir, is where Captain Lewis first made contact with the Shoshone Indians. Camp Fortunate is also where the Shoshone first recognized Sacajawea, and where she was united with her brother, Cameahwait, the leader of the band. Sacajawea's relationship to the Shoshone and the Lewis and Clark expedition was important to the success

of the expedition. The Shoshone offered food and horses, which the expedition critically needed in order to move further west in their quest for a route to the Pacific Ocean.

In addition, Barretts Diversion Dam is also a recognized landmark documented in the Lewis and Clark diaries as Rattlesnake Cliffs by the number of rattlesnakes they encountered. These aspects of the local history have national importance, as there is likely to be an increase in tourism and visitor use in the area as a result of the increased interest in Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration.

