



MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: May 27, 2021

Agenda Item: Planning Update

Action Needed: Informational Only

Time Needed for Presentation: 20 Min

Introduction:

A high-level overview of the planning program for the Montana State Park system was provided in the Board meeting materials. An update on three operation and management planning efforts will be shared. Since staff members are in the early stages of such efforts the intent for this discussion is simply to introduce key issues under evaluation.

Region 1: Flathead Lake Islands

FWP manages four islands on Flathead Lake - Wild Horse Island State Park, Cedar, Bird and O'Neil Islands, which are designated as Wildlife Habitat Protection Areas. The corresponding 2009 Flathead Lake Island Management plan addresses the protection of the natural resources of the islands with careful management of recreational opportunities and visitor impacts. Our current evaluation, in collaboration with Wildlife staff, focuses on Bird, Cedar, and O'Neil/Douglas Islands. Preliminary issues that have been identified include:

- Managing growing recreational use while continuing to perpetuate high quality wildlife habitat.
- Improving human waste management.
- Removing hazards from designated landing sites and other areas.
- Addressing policy and regulatory framework inconsistencies.

Region 3: Missouri Headwaters State Park

Missouri Headwaters State Park (MHWSP) is a historically significant area that played an important role in Montana's early history. The park is designated as a National Historic Landmark. We have hired an external consulting group to develop a master plan to guide current and future development for the park. The park does not have a management plan, though it does have an interpretive plan.

Region 4: Smith River State Park

Noted for its spectacular scenery and renowned fishing, the Smith River is one of the state's outdoor treasures. The 2009 management plan has served the agency and the public well over the years, but it is now time to consider some emerging issues and evaluate potential operational changes. Preliminary issues that have been identified include:

- Considering how to continue to accommodate equitable floater opportunities.
- Assessing the current array of boat camps, landings, and human waste with an eye toward natural, cultural, and historic resource protection.
- Considering the continued use of Camp Baker as a day-use only area for launching.