

P.O. Box 3894



Butte, Montana 59702

March 15, 2010

Beaverhead Big Hole Rules
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

The following are comments from the Big Hole River Foundation to be submitted during the public comment period. The membership of the Foundation (just over 300) was polled as to their opinions on how the current Beaverhead-Big Hole Recreation Rules are working.

The membership of our foundation is equally divided between Montana residents and non-resident. Of the resident members, one-third resides in the Butte area. We think the membership of the Foundation was in the unique position to provide necessary feedback to Fish, Wildlife, & Parks regarding their review of the Big Hole River Recreation Management Plan through an otherwise unreachable conduit.

While only 28 members responded to our request for input regarding the successes of the Recreation Management Plan, numerous non members also told us of their concerns.

The following questions were asked:

- In your experience, has the Recreation Management Plan achieved the goal of reducing use and overcrowding?

Of the respondents, 19 (67%) indicated that the Recreation Management Plan achieved its goal of reducing overcrowding.

- In your experience, is there any particular issue that should be addressed or no longer needs to be addressed in the Recreation Management Plan?

Of the respondents, most (16, 57%) explicitly stated that the Recreation Management Plan should remain as is.

Many respondents offered other suggestions to the Recreation Management Plan that included:

the rest-rotation should end July 15; a need for control of 'flotillas' of non-fishing recreation rafters;
remove the nonresident restriction from the plan; there exists a need to educate the public on river use.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input on the Big Hole River Recreation Management Plan. We believe that the Big Hole River Foundation can best serve as an advocate for sound science based input into policy making.

Respectfully,

Michael A. Bios, Ph.D.

Michael A Bias, Ph.D.,
Executive Director