



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service Northern Region



R1-14-11

Recreation Opportunities

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Dillon, Madison, Wisdom, and Wise River Ranger Districts

History

Straddling the continental divide and covering much of southwest Montana, the 3.3 million acre Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest came into existence on February 2, 1996, when the Forest Service merged the Beaverhead and the Deerlodge National Forests into one administrative unit.

President Theodore Roosevelt first proclaimed the Beaverhead and Deerlodge National Forests in two separate executive orders on July 1, 1908, pulling together lands which earlier presidents had withdrawn as the Hell Gate, Bitter Root, and Big Hole forest reserves between 1897 and 1905. In 1931, the Madison National Forest became part of the Beaverhead and Deerlodge National Forests. In 1945, the west slope of the Madison Range was transferred from the Gallatin National Forest to the Beaverhead National Forest.

The name "Beaver's Head" first appeared in Lewis and Clark's journals in 1805. That year the two captains of the Corps of Discovery passed by the prominent rock shaped like a swimming beaver during their trek to the Pacific. Sacajawea identified the rock as the spot where they would meet her people. Later, the river flowing past the rock was named after it. The Beaverhead River is a major tributary of the Jefferson fork of the Missouri. Beaverhead Rock is located 14 miles northeast of Dillon along Highway 41.

The name "Deer Lodge" comes from the Deer Lodge Mound, a 40-foot-high geothermal formation at the site of present-day Warm Springs State Hospital. The mound's shape, with steam rising from the top, resembled a large medicine lodge, and minerals in the water attracted large numbers of deer, so Indians in the area referred to the then-prominent landmark as the Deer Lodge. The formation was a major landmark for trappers and early travelers in the area who referred to the valley as the Deer Lodge Plain. The mound was described in detail in the journals of Father DeSmet, Granville Stuart, and others. It is still visible from I-90, though now obscured somewhat by trees and buildings.

Visitor Information

In this brochure, you will find a wide variety of recreation opportunities available in the Dillon, Wise River, Wisdom, Ennis, and areas of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Our offices have forest maps and many brochures available to assist you in planning your recreation visit to the forest. Most helpful is our Forest Visitor/Travel maps showing campgrounds, picnic areas, fishing access, lakes, streams, road and trail locations, special interest areas, and travel regulations. These and wilderness maps can be purchased at any Beaverhead-Deerlodge Forest office; other visitor information is free. Check out our website at www.fs.usda.gov/bdnf.

Camping in the Forest

The main camping season in developed campgrounds is from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend.

Although most campgrounds remain open later, water systems are shut down to prevent freezing. Our campgrounds don't have electric or sewer connections. Please don't drain your wastewater onto the ground. Sites in campgrounds are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Fees are charged at many of the developed campgrounds.

You may camp at any dispersed site location in the national forest within 300 feet of a road. **Pack In – Pack Out** your garbage. At all dispersed and developed campsites, campers may not stay more than 16 days within a 30-day period. When the limit is reached, we ask that you move at least 5 miles to another campsite. **Leave No Trace!** Remember to use low impact camping techniques (brochure available) in the backcountry, especially in heavily used areas around lakes. Maintaining the natural quality of these places depends on your efforts.

Pets are welcome in campgrounds but must be kept on a leash in developed recreation areas.



June 2020

Campfires

You may build campfires in most areas as long as you make them safe. In developed recreation areas, use the fire rings or grills provided. You'll find firewood furnished or for sale in only a few recreation areas. Use deadfall for fires or bring your own wood. Please don't cut live trees, shrubs, or other vegetation. When not within developed recreation areas, build campfires away from overhanging branches, steep slopes, rotten stumps or logs, dry grass, and leaves. Keep water handy and keep campfires small. Never leave a fire unattended, even in a campground. A breeze may come up while you are gone and spread the fire. Before you leave your fire, stir the coals while pouring water over them. Make sure it's dead long before leaving it. **During extremely dry conditions, fire restrictions will be in effect. If you are planning a camping trip, call the local Forest Service office to find out if there are fire restrictions in the area you plan to visit.**

Water and Sanitation

Always treat surface water before drinking as it may be contaminated. Boiling is a sure method of water purification; rolling boil at least 1 minute in a covered container before using. Use proper human waste disposal techniques, burying waste 6-8 inches in a duff layer or the soil.

Stock

Stock users need to take care to minimize damage to trees and soil. Please don't picket your animals in marshy areas. Use tree-saver highline in tying your horses. **Any stock feed brought to the forest must be certified weed seed free.**

Cabins

Rustic Forest Service cabins are available to rent during portions of the year (brochure available). Cabins are generally equipped with bare basics (bedding not furnished).

Bears, Bugs, Snakes, and Plants

You should be aware there are bears, poisonous plants, rattlesnakes, ticks, and rodents that may carry disease found on the forest. Brochures are available on how to avoid bears and what to do when bears are encountered, on preventing hantavirus, and on ticks. Food storage restrictions are in effect on the entire forest from March 1 to December 1. Insects are bothersome during the summer months, so you may want to carry insect repellent.

TRAILS

Trail opportunities range from hiking, horseback riding and mountain bike riding to off highway vehicle (OHV) use. Visitors should obtain a free copy of the Motor Vehicle Use map and purchase a Forest Visitor map for specific trail locations, restrictions, and land ownership. Whichever of these activities

you plan, please be considerate of others on the trail, respect wildlife, avoid wetlands, stay on the trail, and if motorized, keep your sound down. Weather conditions are subject to extreme changes in a short period of time. Before embarking on any trip, please check weather forecasts and be prepared for the unexpected. **Motorized, wheeled cross-country travel is prohibited. Please stay on roads and trails.**

Trail Etiquette: To ensure everyone has a good experience on the trails practice trail etiquette. Mountain bicyclists should yield to hikers and horses. Hikers and mountain bicyclists should always yield to horses. Please move off the trail on the downhill side of the trail whenever possible and speak to the rider. OHV riders should pull off the trail, shut off the engine, remove helmets, and speak to the rider.

Cell Phone Coverage

Cell coverage is very limited in most of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, so do not count on your cell phone having service.

DILLON AREA

Agnes Lake Trail #12

Located in the Pioneer Mountains, the trail begins on the east side of Brownes Lake at the State campground and ends 1/2 mile east of Long Branch Lake on Willow Creek Road. It is approximately 4.5 miles (7.2km) long.

The first segment of the Agnes Lake Trail climbs 1.5 miles and almost 1000' in elevation to Agnes Lake. The grade is quite steep in places. Most of the trail is in dense timber, but there are occasional openings for viewing. The last 1/2 mile to Agnes Lake is an old jeep road and is closed to motorized vehicles April 1 to December 1.

Agnes Lake covers 99 acres and has sandy beaches. Primitive campsites and toilets are found on the north and Southeast sides of the lake. The trail climbs westward along the north side of the lake. About 2 miles beyond Agnes Lake, the trail reaches Rainbow Lake. Some suitable campsites are found along the north side of the lake. Rainbow Lake is about 11 acres in size. The trail continues to the north of Rainbow Lake for another 1.5 miles and ends on the Willow Creek Road.

The trail can be accessed from either end. To access from Brownes Lake, take I-15 north of Dillon for 22 miles, take the Glen exit and follow the signs to the west for 8 miles up Rock Creek to Brownes Lake Campground. The trailhead is on the south side of the campground. To access from Willow Creek, take I-15 north of Dillon for 12 miles. Take the Apex exit and travel west up the Birch Creek Road 9 miles to the junction with the Willow Creek road. Take the Willow Creek road for 9 miles to the trailhead located in a timber harvest area.

Birch Creek Center Trail System

Located in the Pioneer Mountains, Birch Creek Center was originally constructed as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp in the 1930's. Presently, the University of Montana Western (UMW) uses the Center under a special use permit from the Forest Service. The Birch Creek Center includes several short hiking trails. This system can be accessed by taking I-15 north of Dillon for 12 miles, take the Apex Exit. Turn up the Birch Creek Road and follow the signs to the Center.

Three distinct hiking trail loops radiate from the Birch Creek Center (BCC). These trails can be walked individually or as a unit by using marked cutoffs. The **Discovery Trail** is the shortest at 1.4 km/.9 mile. It begins at the southeast corner of the BCC campus and it is universally accessible. Maintaining a gentle gradient throughout its length, the trail passes through a mixed age Douglas-fir forest, a grove of aspen, and loops back through open sagebrush.

The **Forest Trail** begins about 200 yards up Discovery Trail. It is 1.3 km/.8-mile-long and covers terrain that is a bit more challenging. It climbs through a Douglas-fir forest and open sagebrush meadows with spectacular views of the high peaks in the East Pioneer Mountains. Along the way, make sure to notice the mining adit (a surface mine opening) and "the old miner's cabin". The trail returns to the Center through a riparian area along Thief Creek, where you can see evidence of several resident moose.

The **Stream Trail** begins on the north side of the Center and drops down into the riparian area along Thief Creek. It ends at the Birch Creek Guard Station, a log cabin built in the late 1930's and now is available for overnight rental (www.recreation.gov).

From here, the **Pond Trail** begins and follows Birch Creek to a pond built by the CCC's in the 1930's. The trail continues to the Aspen Picnic Area. As you walk the trail, look for evidence, still visible, of sudden flooding caused by the failure of an upstream dam in the 1920's.

Cross-Country Ski Trails

Cross-Country ski trails are located in the Pioneer Mountains Northwest of Dillon. These marked, but ungroomed, trails are open throughout the snow season. Maps of the trails are available at the Dillon Ranger District Office.

Elkhorn Hot Spring Ski Trails, located 37 miles northwest of Dillon, begin at the plowed parking lot near the Elkhorn Hot Springs Resort. There are 23.3 km/15miles of "most difficult" ungroomed trails. The trail system consists of several loops with approximately 1000' of vertical climb.

Birch Creek area is located 21 miles northwest of Dillon. The trail begins across the Birch Creek bridge on the Birch Creek road about 1 mile west of the junction with the Willow Creek road.

Downhill Skiing

Maverick Mountain Ski Area, located approximately 30 miles west of Dillon in the Grasshopper Valley, receives an average of 180" of snowfall per year. Base elevation is 6500' with a top elevation of 8620' and a 2120' vertical drop. This is a day use area offering 18 runs. It is located near Elkhorn Hot Spring, where you can enjoy soaking after a day of skiing.

Snowmobile Trails

Forty miles northwest of Dillon are 23 miles of marked/groomed trails, a cooperative operation with the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the Beaverhead Sno-Riders Club of Dillon, and the Wise River Jackpine Savages Snowmobile Club. Maps of the route from Elkhorn Hot Springs to Wise River are available at the Dillon and Wise River Ranger District office.

Mountain Bike Trails

Following are several popular trails for mountain bikes. A listing of other mountain bike trails is available at the Dillon Ranger District office.



Birch Creek to Rock Creek Trail

The trail begins at the Birch Creek Rental Cabin (elevation 6400') and ends at the campground at the East end of Brownes Lake in Rock Creek. It is approximately 17 miles in length one way. You should allow 4-5 hours to complete this moderate trail. It is a long ride but will give you a good appreciation of the scenery in the East Pioneer Mountains. Leave a vehicle at Brownes Lake for a one-way ride.

To access the trail, leave I-15 at Apex exit north of Dillon. Follow Birch Creek road to Birch Creek Rental Cabin. From the Birch Creek Rental Cabin follow the Birch Creek road to Willow Creek road. Take Willow Creek Road to the end where trailhead # 120 to Agnes Lake via Rainbow Lake is located to the right. Follow trail #120 through the woods and down to Agnes Lake. From Agnes Lake descend a steep rocky slope towards Rock Creek on trail #122. After 1/3 mile the trail crosses a mining road; take this mining road to the left and head down and through the tungsten mine which cuts into the hillside. Exit at the far side of the mine and continue down to cross a bridge across Rock Creek. Now, follow Rock Creek Road down to Brownes Lake which lies on the right.

Pear Lake Trail

To access the trail, leave I-15 at the Apex exit north of Dillon. Follow the Birch Creek road to Dinner Station Campground where you can park (elevation 7132'). The trail starts where a primitive road sign is located across the small bridge and behind the graveled parking area. This loop trail is approximately 11 miles long. You should allow 3 1/2 to 4 hours to complete this trail that varies from easy to difficult.

The trail is actually a jeep road. After 3 miles, it crosses Birch Creek located below towering scree fields (talus slopes) of Torrey Mountain (11,147' in elevation). This is a steep, rocky climb for about 1 mile; then easier riding up past Boot Lake to Pear Lake with its breathtaking views. The trail ends at Pear Lake, a beautiful spot in the East Pioneers which is totally enclosed by jagged 10,000' peaks, i.e. Tent Mountain and Sawtooth Mountain. Return by the same route.

WISDOM AREA

The Wisdom District maintains numerous trails that lead into spectacular backcountry with many mountain lakes, most of which offer excellent fishing. There are also numerous trails that lead into the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

Ruby-May Creek Trail # 102

The Ruby-May Creek Trail serves as access for hunting, limited fishing, hiking and stock use. Portions of the trail are in primitive condition.

The trail is approximately 10 miles long and runs from May Creek Campground to the junction with Forest Service Road #624 (Gibbonsville Road).

This trail can be accessed from either the May Creek Campground or Gibbonsville. From Wisdom go west on Highway 23 approximately 16 miles to the May Creek Campground.

Sand Lake, Lily Lake Trail #380

The trail serves as access for hunting, fishing, scenic viewing, and recreational stock use.

The Sand Lake/Lily Lake Trail begins 1 mile west of the Steel Creek Campground, located 5 1/2 miles east of Wisdom. Sand Lake Trail is 8 miles long and the Lily Lake Trail is 3 miles long. The Sand Lake Trail ends at the junction with the Pioneer Loop Trail #750. Sand Lake is 1/4 mile south on the Pioneer Loop Trail. Lily Lake is 2 1/2 miles from the trailhead; the trail will split, the left fork leads to Sand Lake and the right fork leads to Lily Lake. Lily Lake is located another 1/2 mile down the right fork of the trail.

Snowmobile Trails

Cold, dry powder snow comes early and stays late, assuring great snowmobiling. If you seek a challenge and solitude, and don't mind sharing trails with moose, elk and other wintering

wildlife, Wisdom is the place for you. A hot springs is located nearby in Jackson, Montana. A system of trails is available.

Wise River-Polaris Trail, and the Steel Creek Trail are located just east of Wisdom. Head west from Wisdom to find the **Gibbonsville Road** which continues all the way to Salmon, Idaho. The **Placer Creek Trail** crosses the Continental Divide near Lost Trail Pass and drops into the Bitterroot Valley. Snowmobilers will also enjoy the **Stewart Meadow Complex** which is found in the East Pioneer Mountains.

Cross Country Ski Trails

The Wisdom Ranger District has many miles of cross-country ski trails.

Among the most popular trails are the Chief Joseph Cross Country Trails, located 28 miles west of Wis-



dom. The trail system consists of several loops which provide a variety of lengths and skill levels. There are 8km/5.2 miles of "Easiest" trails, 14.5km/9.3 miles "more difficult" trails and 2.1km/1.3 miles of "most difficult" trails that are groomed weekly by the Bitterroot Ski Club. The trail system starts on the North side of Highway 43 at Chief Joseph Pass. There is plowed parking for 55-60 cars. Toilets and maps are available at the trailhead.

WISE RIVER AREA

This Wise River District maintains numerous trails that lead into spectacular backcountry with many mountain lakes, most of which offer excellent fishing. There are also numerous trails that lead into the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness.

Odell Lake Trail #758

The Odell Lake Trail begins at the end of the Odell Creek Road #2414 in low meadow lands along Odell Creek. It is a moderate trail, approximately 6.1 miles long. The trail follows along the north side of the creek through the edge of the lodgepole pine forest. The first mile is over an old road that was closed many years ago due to bogs and a sluff that closed a portion of the road. The trail passes through occasional small meadows with abundant wildflowers and grasses.

In the second mile, the walls of the valley narrow and steepen. Here the trail cuts a path along the bottom edge of the valley, becoming steeper and crossing the base of a rocky talus slope along the way. The trail continues to climb moderately, leveling out more as it comes closer to Odell Lake passing alternately through lodgepole pine and subalpine fir forests and wet meadows.

The last 1/2 mile is a scenic hike through a large meadow system just south of Odell Lake. Hiking through the open ground, you can see a panorama of gentle, rolling, forested hillsides and a field with numerous wildflowers. To the east, the East Pioneer Mountains loom in the background across the Wise River valley. The trail passes along the west edge of Odell Lake and switchbacks sharply uphill for 1/4 mile before reaching Lake-of-The-Woods. From here the trail drops quickly before joining the Pioneer Loop National Recreation Trail #750, 1/2 mile later near the head of Lacy Creek.

Odell Lake Trail can be accessed from the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway via the Wyman Creek Road #2417 to Odell Creek Road #2414. At the trailhead there is a new graveled parking area with adequate parking for vehicles pulling horse trailers.

Gold Creek Trail #152

The trail begins as a gentle walk from the trailhead in a side drainage of Gold Creek. The trail crosses a small spring creek on a puncheon bridge and follows a small drainage heading east and northeast approximately 1/2 mile until it crosses main Gold Creek. The crossing is a wide ford for stock and a log for foot travel. Just across Gold Creek, it junctions with Trail #140 that heads north to Moose Creek, Boulder Creek, Fourth-of-July Creek and Sheep Creek. East of this junction the trail travels along the edge of a lodgepole pine forest and the Gold Creek valley bottom. The scenery is beautiful with white water hemlock and yellow cinquefoil flowers in the valley bottom and sagebrush on the side hills. As the trail continues, it begins to climb sharply in some places, leveling out again after 3 miles. After the junction with Trail #269 the trail climbs up on the side slopes on the north side of Gold Creek. From here it is easy to look down on the creek and see why the creek gets its name having the distinctive, bright gold color. Also, the higher mountains come into view, mostly dry, eroded sandstone geologic formations. At the start of the last mile, the trail leads away to the north and climbs steeply up the side of the mountain. This is the most difficult portion of the hike as the trail switchbacks up the steeply sloped mountainside. The trail passes through whitebark pine and subalpine fir forests to the top of the mountain pass. From here a breathtaking view awaits the weary hiker as the Gold Creek Valley sweeps out back to the west and the Canyon Creek Valley opens to view to the east. 1/2 mile later the trail joins with Trail #92.

Access to the trail can be gained via the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway and Highway 43. The trail begins on the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway at the Lost Meadows Trailhead, 1/2 mile south of Gold Creek and the Maurice Cemetery. It is approximately 6.5 miles long.



Cross-Country Ski Trails

Ski trails are open throughout the snow season, but are not regularly groomed. As with any activity, safety must be considered even on short day trips.

Snowmobile Trails

In December, snow transforms these mountains and river valleys into a giant snowmobile park. Choose one of the many trails within the system. Trails include **Quartz Hill**, leading to a massive, high plateau: **Anderson Meadows**, which leads to back-country lakes and meadow play area. **Pettengill** travels eight miles to Pettengill Falls. **Lacy Creek** has 10 miles of groomed and un-groomed trails to five high mountain lakes. Other trails are **Bryant Creek** and the **Highline**. The **Wise River-Elkhorn Hot Spring National Recreation Snowmobile Trail** connects Wise River with the Grasshopper Valley. Maps of the trails are available at the Wise River and Dillon Ranger District offices.

ENNIS/SHERIDAN AREA

Gold Butte Trail #31

This is a short, moderate trail, approximately 6 miles round trip, with excellent views in the popular West Fork area of the Gravelly Range. Just 25 miles northeast of Yellowstone National Park and running out of the popular West Fork Recreation Area, this trail climbs up into the quiet beauty of the Gravelly Range. The Madison River and the West Fork boast world famous fishing. For those particularly interested in expeditions down the river, float trips can be arranged out of both Ennis and West Yellowstone. The West Fork valley teems with aspen that burst into brilliant red and orange colors in the fall. The views out to the Madison and the wildlife make this spot a photographer's haven. This is also an ideal single-track mountain bike ride.

The Gold Butte Trail leaves Forest Road #209 and begins a steady climb through a partially logged area shaded by many large Douglas-fir trees. The timber cutting has opened up spectacular views out across the Madison Valley and into the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. Exiting the logged area, the trail maintains a gradual grade for a half mile where it starts to side hill above Gazelle Creek.

The trail remains high above the creek, turning upstream to the north and entering another logged area. This timber stand was harvested by clear cutting in 1987. Past this spot, the trail crosses into an area harvested in the mid 1960's where a new generation of trees now sprout up everywhere. For the next mile, the trail contours around the south side of Gold Butte, joining the Standard Creek Road as it ends.

To access the trail, follow US Highway 287 south 35 miles from Ennis to the West Fork of the Madison River. Make a right at the rest area and cross the Madison River on Lyon Bridge. The trailhead starts 1/2 mile up the road, just past the West Fork Cow Camp, on the right. There is parking just past the trailhead and across the road, also down by Lyon Bridge or down the road near the Standard Creek Auto Tour sign.

Potosi Cut-Off Trail

This moderate, 6.2-mile round trip trail in the Tobacco Root Mountains climbs through several steep switchbacks for the first mile. Once on top of the ridge looking down into the South Meadow Creek drainage, it flattens out, passing through a large open area. A mile before intersecting with the Rock Creek Trail #304, the Potosi Cut-Off Trail begins to gradually climb again. Just past here, it climbs up a fairly consistent steep grade until it terminates on a ridge top, connecting with Trail #351. Trail #351 is a very short trail which serves to join the Potosi Cut-Off Trail with the Albro Lake and North Willow Creek systems.

To access the trail, follow US Highway 287 north from Ennis to Harrison. Turn left at Harrison and drive five miles up the road to Pony. Just before Pony, make a left at the sign for South Willow Creek. Follow the South Willow Creek Road for 8 miles, past the Hot Springs to Potosi Campground. The trailhead starts at the South Willow Creek Recreation Area sign, just outside the campground. You can park in or near the campground.

There are many possibilities for day and extended hikes, or rides associated with this trail. Following the Rock Creek Trail #304 brings you back down to the South Willow Creek road about a mile from Potosi Campground. This is a great day hike or bike loop (about 6 miles round trip). Trail #351 leads to the North Willow Creek and Albro Lake Trails. These extended trips would require at least a night of camping out.

Snowmobiling Trails

The Madison District has well marked snowmobile trails that are maintained by the Vigilante Snowmobile Club in partnership with the Forest Service and the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. There are approximately 50 miles of marked trails, with 25 to 30 miles being occasionally groomed. The trail begins at Lyon Bridge in the West Fork where a plowed parking area is established. Maps are available from the Madison Ranger District.

FISHING

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest is home to four species of trout, three kinds of char, mountain whitefish and the beautiful arctic grayling. In the Dillon, Wisdom, Wise River, Ennis and Sheridan areas, a wide variety of fishing opportunities and settings are available to the angler on public lands.

Catch-and-release fishing is encouraged for the westslope cutthroat trout because their numbers and distribution are declining. For that reason, waters statewide are closed to the taking of bull trout.

Bag limits and seasons vary for some of the lakes and streams in the forest. Consult the State fishing regulations before setting out to fish your National Forest.

Clark Canyon Reservoir, on I-15, just 18 miles south of Dillon, is one of the most popular fishing destinations in the region. Managed by the Bureau of Reclamation, the lake offers the angler a chance to catch rainbow and brown trout, along with burbot, commonly called ling. The lake provides a rich feeding ground in which freshwater shrimp abound and are the favorite diet. This excellent feed results in not uncommon seven to nine-pound trout which have a wonderful flavor. Clark Canyon provides year-round fishing from shore and boat or ice fishing in the winter.

The Beaverhead River, a “blue ribbon” trout stream, flows north through the valley turning slightly east to join the Big Hole River near Twin Bridges, Montana. Rainbow trout, brown trout and mountain whitefish are the most common fish in the Beaverhead River. This river is nationally renowned for the quality of the fishing and the spectacular setting. It is a favorite of both locals and visiting anglers as it has some of the best fishing in the country, accessible from shore or float trip. From the Pipe Organ Bridge to Barretts Station, state fish authorities report that a trophy fish classification is four pounds and up. Mature rainbow will top out in the six to ten-pound range and the browns become a very dense fish, many weighing 4 to 5 pounds.

The famous Big Hole river, another “blue ribbon” trout stream begins as a tiny mountain stream on the national forest lands in the upper or south end of the Big Hole Valley. It winds north through the center of the valley past Jackson, Wisdom, then turning more to the east flowing past Wise River and Divide, south to Melrose and Glen, turning again to the northeast where it joins the Beaverhead and Ruby Rivers to form the Jefferson River, one of the three forks of the Missouri.

The upper Big Hole has the last stream dwelling native arctic grayling in the lower 48 states; catch and release **only** for this species. June brings on the salmon fly hatch and the river becomes alive with activity. There are many qualified and experienced guides able to provide the fisherman with the thrill of a lifetime. Lower stretches of this river produce very large browns.



For the angler seeking solitude, the many miles of small streams and numerous high mountain lakes offer a real chance to “get away from it all”. Access to these lakes and streams varies from roadside fishing to strenuous hikes.

SCENIC DRIVES

Many of the Forest Service roads provide visitors the opportunity for drives from one hour to an entire day to view wildlife and panoramic vistas of high peaks and valleys. Visitors should obtain a Forest map to plan trips and take necessary precautions for unexpected changes in weather and road conditions. Forest roads will vary in condition from well-maintained to primitive roads passable only with four-wheel drive vehicles. Check with the respective ranger district offices for specific road conditions.

DILLON AND WISE RIVER AREAS

Pioneer Mountains National Scenic Byway

On the 47-mile Pioneer Mountains National Scenic Byway (formally known as highway 73) you can travel the length of the Pioneer Mountain Range. Granite peaks topping 10,000’ in elevation are to the east and the gentler, forested terrain stretches out to the west.

You’ll see mountain meadows, lodgepole pine forests and broad “willow bottoms”. The road gently ascends a 7800’ divide between Wise River, flowing north, and Grasshopper Creek, flowing South.

Designated a national scenic byway on January 10, 1989, it extends south from Montana highway 43 at Wise River, to Montana highway 278, between Dillon and Jackson. The Pioneer Mountains Byway is paved. Interpretive sites along the byway tell travelers about the natural features and some of the interesting history of the area.

Near Wise River, a ranching community, along the Big Hole River, fishing enthusiasts from all corners of the globe try their skill on the Big Hole’s blue-ribbon trout fishery. On the edge of Wise River, the byway takes you south, up the Wise River Valley. In this scenic valley, fields of sagebrush on the high ground give way to willows in the river bottoms. Lodgepole pine and Douglas fir cover the adjacent hillsides. From the road you may catch an occasional glimpse of moose, elk, mule deer, black bears, coyotes, or beavers. Early-day ranchers, miners and trappers used this northern section of the byway to transport their goods.

As the valley narrows, look for the old railroad bed of the Montana Southern Railway, the last narrow-gauge railroad built in the United States. The railroad served the Elkhorn Mine, one of the largest ore-mill structures in the United States, and the town of Coolidge that grew up around the mill. Coolidge offers an interesting side trip off the byway.

At the head of Wise River, the Byway climbs to the broad meadows of Moose Park and Crystal Park. Rockhounds come to

Crystal Park in the summer to search for quartz crystals. The area is open to the public for digging crystals. South of Crystal Park, the byway drops into the Grasshopper Creek valley and passes by Elkhorn Hot Springs Resort where visitors can enjoy the hot outdoor pools. You pass Maverick Mountain Ski area before you leave the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Beyond the forest boundary, the Grasshopper Creek valley widens to spectacular views. Cattle ranching has been the economic mainstay of this area for more than 100 years. The scenic valley is dotted with haystacks, some of which have been built with “beaverslides” and several large ranch headquarters. The byway takes you through the small community of Polaris, with its rural schoolhouse and post office, and on out to State Highway 278. Travel along the byway will take you by nine developed Forest Service campgrounds. The area offers a wide array of hiking and riding trails.

The road is officially closed from December 1 - May 15 between the Pettengill parking lot to the north and Elkhorn Hot Springs to the south. During this time frame, the byway is a National Recreation Snowmobile Trail, offering great snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. For additional information, contact the Wise River or Dillon Ranger Districts.

WISDOM AREA

The Flight of the Nez Perce

In August 1877, the tranquility of the Big Hole Valley was shattered by the sound of gunfire as a battle erupted between five bands of Nez Perce Indians and U.S. military forces along the banks of the Big Hole river. For valley settlers, anxiety turned to fear and concern as nearly 800 Nez Perce men, woman and children gathered their wounded and fled southward towards Skinner Meadows and the country beyond.

Today, you can retrace the routes used by the Nez Perce and their military pursuers. A brochure is available at the Dillon, Wisdom and Wise River ranger districts, which describes the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail between the Big Hole National Battlefield, Montana and Leadore, Idaho. A map shows the auto tour route in detail. The designated auto route stays on all-weather roads and allows you to experience the Nez Perce Trail from a distance. The auto tour route is passable for all types of vehicles. An alternative route exists from Lost Trail Pass on the Montana/Idaho border south to Salmon and Leadore, Idaho, along Hwy 93 and 28. For those seeking the most authentic historic route, a rough two lane road, connects Jackson, MT and the Horse Prairie Valley. Examine the map carefully and watch for signs. You may want to take a more detailed forest map. The adventure route is usually passable from July to October. It is not recommended for motor homes or vehicles towing trailers.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

DILLON AREA

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

Fourteen miles north of Dillon on Montana Highway 41 is **Beaverhead Rock State Park** (undeveloped). Sacagawea recognized this huge rock resembling the head of a swimming beaver and told the captains that she was near her Shoshone tribe's summer homeland. There is an interpretive sign south of Beaverhead Rock on MT Highway 41. This area is managed by the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

Clark's Lookout State Monument (undeveloped) is located about 1 mile north of Dillon on Highway 91. Clark climbed this area to get a look at the Beaverhead Valley on August 13, 1803. This area is managed by the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

Camp Fortunate Overlook south of Dillon on I-15, Clark Canyon Dam exit, provides a view that approximates Camp Fortunate (which is now underwater). Near here, Lewis and the Shoshones waited for the arrival of Clark and the main party. It was named Camp Fortunate by the captains because of Clark's timely arrival and the fact that Sacagawea proved to be Chief Cameahwait's sister. It was here that the expedition gained from Chief Cameahwait the horses they needed to take them across the mountain ranges into the Columbia River drainage. This area is managed by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Lemhi Pass is where Lewis and Clark crossed the Continental Divide, leaving the Louisiana Purchase territory. There is a small campground and memorial to Sacagawea near the pass. This road is sometimes rutted, boggy and is extremely slippery when wet. A high clearance vehicle is recommended. The Idaho side is steeper, so traveling with a trailer or motorhome is not recommended. Backtracking up I-15 to county road 278 is a paved shortcut to Montana's western-most Lewis and Clark Trail sites. It also closely follows the route Clark took on his return journey eastward in 1806.

WISDOM AREA

Nez Perce National Historic Trail

Congress passed the National Trails System Act in 1968 establishing a framework for a nationwide system of scenic, recreational, and historic trails. The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) Trail, extending approximately 1,170 miles from the vicinity of Wallowa Lake, Oregon, to the Bear's Paw Battlefield near Chinook, Montana, was added to this system by Congress as a national Historic Trail in 1986.

The Nez Perce Indians, composed originally of a number of independent villages and bands, were long known as friends of the whites. They had welcomed Lewis and Clark, fur trappers, and missionaries to their homeland in the mountains,

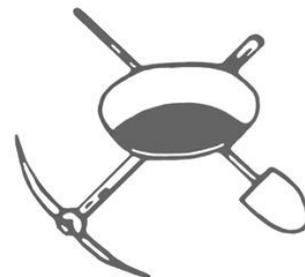
valleys, and along the rivers of southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon and north central Idaho. In 1855, Washington Territorial Governor, Isaac I. Stevens, responding to increasing white expansion, negotiated a treaty with the Nez Perce chiefs, recognizing their peoples' right to their traditional homeland and establishing it as a reservation of some 5,000 square miles.

In 1860, prospectors, encroaching on Nez Perce lands, struck gold. In the ensuing rush, thousands of miners, merchants, and settlers, disregarding Steven's treaty, overran large parts of the reservation, appropriating the Indian's lands and livestock and heaping mistreatment and injustices on the Nez Perce. To cope with the crisis, the United States Government engaged the angered Nez Perce in new treaty talks that culminated in a large treaty council in 1863.

Nearly all tribal bands were represented. When the government tried to get some of the bands to cede all or most of their land, they refused to do so and left the council. In their absence, other chiefs, without tribal authority to speak for the departed bands, did just that, ceding the lands of those who had left the council. Their act resulted in a division of the tribe. Those who had signed were praised by the whites as "treaty" Indians. Those who did not sign became known as the "non-treaty" Nez Perce.

For some years, the non-treaty bands continued to live on their land, insisting that no one had the right to sell them. However, conflicts with the growing white population increased, particularly in the Wallowa country of northeastern Oregon, the homeland of Chief Joseph's band. In May, 1877, the Army finally ordered the non-treaties to turn over their countries to the whites and move onto a small reservation. Rather than risk war with the army, the non-treaty chiefs decided to move onto the reservation at Lapwai, Idaho.

Pent-up emotions, stemming from years of high-handedness and mistreatment by whites and from the order to leave their homelands, moved several embittered young warriors to ride out to the Salmon River and kill some whites, avenging the past murders of tribal members. The hope for a peaceful move to the small reservation at Lapwai, ended, and the flight of the Nez Perce Began on June 15, 1877.



Pursued by the Army, the non-treaties left Idaho, intending initially to seek safety with their Crow allies on the plains to the east. When this failed, flight to Canada became their only hope. Their long desperate and circuitous route, as they traveled and fought to escape pursuing white forces, is what we now call the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

For further description of the trail, refer to the Scenic Drives section under "The Flight of the Nez Perce". A brochure is available.

WISE RIVER AREA

Elkhorn Mine and Coolidge Ghost Town

Located 6 miles off the Pioneer Mountains National Scenic Byway, the Elkhorn Mine was discovered on October 24, 1873, by Mike Steel and F. W. Panish. Bill Roe was said to have given the mine its name as a result of having found a pair of elk horns in the area.

The mine was first opened and worked by a company financed in the East. Silver ore, which was the mine's primary metal, was hauled by bull teams as far as Corrine, Utah, where it was loaded on railroad cars and transported to San Francisco. At San Francisco the ore was transferred to ships sailing for Swansea, Wales, where it was treated and made into metal.

In 1911, Mr. William R. Allen had begun buying claims in the area and in 1913, he formed the Boston Montana Mining Company, who hired S. W. Hall to come to the mine and examine the Elkhorn properties. Hall spent forty days investigating the claims. Impressed, he urged the company to begin operations which had every indication of a big return. At this time, the seeds of Allen's dream must have surely begun to form.

William R. Allen was born in French Gulch near Anaconda, Montana, in July of 1871. He received his early education in the Deer Lodge county school, then attended the Helena Business College, where he graduated with honors in 1891. As a young man he was employed by Marcus Daly in the early development of the Anaconda smelter and was in charge of Mr. Daly's lumber business. In 1893, Mr. Allen married Eliza Berkin, and they had four children together. Following his wife's death in 1917, Allen married Ethel Louise deMar, with whom he raised three children. In 1902, Allen was elected to the legislature, representing the Republican party from his county. He served in the capacity until 1908, when he was elected lieutenant governor, serving in this office under Governor Edwin L. Norris until 1913. When he retired from politics, he decided to devote his time to raising money for the development of Montana enterprises.

As early as 1914, the community of Coolidge, named after W. R. Allen's friend Calvin Coolidge, had begun to thrive and at this time work was just beginning on the mine tunnel.

The town had both telephone service and electricity provided by a power line carrying 65,000 volts running from Divide over the hill to Coolidge. The cost on completion was \$150,000. With more families moving to Coolidge, a school district was established in January of 1922. In 1927, the school district was abandoned and in 1932, the post office was discontinued, and the mail was ordered to Wise River.

An easy one-mile walking trail lets you discover and explore the abandoned mining town of Coolidge.

ENNIS / SHERIDAN AREA

Virginia City Historic District

The gold of Alder Gulch drew thousands of people to southwestern Montana during the 1860's mining rush to the Rocky Mountains. A lucky band of weary prospectors, led by 27-year-old Bill Fairweather, discovered the gulch on May 26, 1863, and within two weeks, hundreds of people stampeded to the district. Speculators laid out a town site, named Varina, after the wife of confederate President, Jefferson Davis. Union miners later agreed to change the name of the townsite to Virginia City, which became the center of the diggings. With the creation of the new territory of Montana, Virginia City became its capital. In 1864, the first census counted 11,493 people.

The gold field extended 14 miles along Alder Gulch, from the head in the steep bare Gravelly Range to the broad alluvial fan of the Stinking water River (later named the Ruby River). Within three seasons, miners had dug 30,000,000 worth of gold dust and nuggets. Such wealth attracted a band of desperados, organized under Henry Plummer, who the miners had elected as their sheriff. The Plummer gang robbed travelers and stages, murdering at least 102 men before the outraged community formed a vigilante committee. In 1863-64, during five weeks of an incredibly cold winter, the vigilantes hung 24 men, including Plummer on his own gallows.

Virginia City was designated as a registered national historic landmark on July 4, 1961, under the primary theme of Western Expansion, the Mining Frontier and includes 154 contributing structures within the town and the surrounding cultural landscape. Restoration of the building began decades ago. The state of Montana recently purchased much of Virginia City and it is now under the management of the Montana Commission.



RENTAL CABINS

DILLON AREA

Reservations may be made via Internet: www.recreation.gov
Phone: 1-877-444-6777. Dillon area cabins are available yearlong.

Birch Creek Cabin

The Dillon Ranger District rents Birch Creek cabin located in the Pioneer Mountains. The location is especially popular with cross-country skiers and summer hiking enthusiasts. Trails leaving the cabin will take hikers to additional lakes in the Pioneer Mountains. There are two popular ski trails adjacent to Birch Creek: the Birch Creek Loop and the May Lake Ski Trail. The cabin has electricity and running water. There is no running water in the winter. Drinking water should be packed in or water taken from Thief Creek should be treated. The cabin is a two-room log cabin which contains a kitchen and a bedroom, which sleeps four. The kitchen contains a table, chairs, wood burning cook stove, and electric range, pots, pans and utensils for four people. The bedroom contains two bunks with room for a mattress on the floor and a wood burning heating stove and firewood. There is an outdoor toilet.

The cabin is located off Interstate 15, just below the University of Montana Western Environmental Education Center. Take the Apex exit, where you turn west and travel the Birch Creek gravel road for 7 1/2 miles to the Education Center turnoff. Depending on the snow conditions you may have to park at this turnoff. Cross the bridge and take the first turn right on the Thief Creek Road. The cabin is about 1/4 mile to the west at Thief Creek.

Horse Prairie Cabin

The district also rents the Horse Prairie cabin located in the Beaverhead Mountains. This is a Forest Service administrative cabin used in the past by work crews. The Coyote Creek Road to the west of the cabin provides access to good cross-country skiing terrain. The Coyote Creek Road runs approximately 7 miles to the top of the Big Hole Divide. The vertical rise from the cabin to the Big Hole Divide is approximately 1500 vertical feet.

The log cabin has two rooms with sleeping facilities for four people. It has a wood burning heating stove and propane cook stove. The cabin is equipped with a table, cooking and eating utensils, cots, and mattresses. It also is equipped with an axe, shovel, bucket, cleaning gear and firewood. Bring your own water. There is also an outdoor toilet.

From Dillon, take Interstate 15 south for 17 miles, turn at Clark Canyon Reservoir (west onto state highway 324). Drive 12 miles to Grant, then 7 miles west of Grant at Red Butte, turn right (north) onto the Bloody Dick Road #181 (leads to Reservoir Lake). Follow the Bloody Dick Road west for approximately 6 miles to the Horse Prairie Guard Station turnoff sign. Follow the Coyote Creek road northwest for

1 3/4 miles to the Horse Prairie Cabin. In the winter, over-the-snow distance to the cabin will vary from 1 to 6 miles.

Bloody Dick Cabin

Ice fishing in Reservoir Lake and exploring the area around the cabin are activities people enjoy in the winter. Some winter recreationists snowmobile to the cabin and take day trips on cross-country skis, using the cabin as a base camp.

The Bloody Dick Cabin is a wood frame building. It has one room with two bunk beds and mattresses, a small wood burning cook stove and a propane cook stove. The cabin is equipped with a table, cooking utensils, axe, shovel, bucket, cleaning gear and firewood. A spring, east of the cabin in the willows, furnishes drinking water. The water must be treated. There is an outdoor toilet.

There are two ways to access the cabin. From Dillon take Interstate 15 south 17 miles turn right at Clark Canyon Reservoir (west onto state highway 324). Drive 12 miles to Grant, then 7 miles west of Grant at Red Butte, turn right (north) onto the bloody Dick Road #181. Follow this road 19 miles to a road junction by Reservoir Lake Campground. Follow the left fork down to the creek, cross Bloody Dick Creek and bear left. The cabin is in the timber 1/2 mile from the junction. Snow conditions vary from year to year and depending on the snow year; distances to travel over-the-snow will vary.

Another route to the cabin follows the Bloody Dick Road #181 south from Jackson. This is a snowmobile route in the winter and is approximately 23 miles long. Just beyond Reservoir Lake Campground turn right. Follow this road down across Bloody Dick Creek and bear left. The cabin is 1/2 mile from the turnoff.



WISDOM AREA

Reservations may be made via Internet: www.recreation.gov
Phone: 1-877-444-6777

Gordon Reese Cabin

The cabin is located 1 mile from the Montana/Idaho border on Highway 43. This cabin was completed in 2001 and serves as a warming hut to cross-country skiers enjoying the trails at Chief Joseph Pass. It is available for rent from Dec. 1 to April 15, May 15 through Labor Day weekend. The main floor is well equipped with benches, tables, dishes, pots, pans and utensils, a propane stove with an oven, sink for gray water and a wood stove. The loft has room for up to 8 people to sleep. The basement stores firewood. There is an outdoor toilet.

Getting there, from Wisdom head west 26 miles to Chief Joseph Pass, turn right into parking lot one mile before the Highway 93 junction. The cabin is about .6 mile hike from the parking lot.

Hogan Cabin

Hogan Cabin was built in the 1920's to provide field housing to trail crews, timber cruisers and grazing inspectors. The cabin is a one room log building. It has no electricity or running water. It is equipped with a wood stove, a table, chairs, bunk beds, mattresses, an axe, shovel, bucket, dishes, pots, pans, cleaning gear, a propane cook stove, a lantern and an outdoor toilet. Winter recreationists can snowmobile or cross-country ski to the cabin. It is located 6 miles off the Trail Creek Road #106. There are 3 separate ways to get there including Trail Creek Road, from the Chief Joseph Cross-country Ski Trails, or on the Shoe Fly Trail. It is located about 18 miles west of Wisdom on Highway 43.

We believe it was built by miners in the early 1900's and used by them up until the 1930's or 1940's. Hunters took over the cabin for a number of years but were asked to vacate it in the 1960's. By 1990 the cabin consisted of walls and a roof, in 1993 the Forest Service and volunteers from the Bitterroot Nordic Ski Club worked together to rescue the cabin for skiers and summer visitors.

Twin Lakes Cabin

The cabin is located at the base of Squaw and Jumbo Mountains on the shore of Twin Lakes. The cabin was built in the 1920's to provide field quarters for trail crews, smoke chasers, timber cruisers and grazing inspectors. The cabin is a one room wood building. It has two beds with mattresses, a wood burning stove and a propane cook stove. It is also equipped with a table, cooking and eating utensils, axe, shovel, bucket and cleaning gear. There is no electricity or running water. There is an outdoor toilet and wood is provided.

Winter recreationists enjoy snowmobiling, cross country skiing and exploring the area. Twin Lakes cabin is available for rent from October 15 to April 15 yearly.

WISE RIVER AREA

Reservations may be made via; Internet: www.recreation.gov
Phone: 1-877-444-6777

Canyon Creek Cabin

Located 13 miles west of Melrose, Montana, the cabin sits at the base of a sheer cliff, which is home to many mountain goats. Moose can usually be found in the willow bottoms and a creek nearby has brook trout and some rainbow and cutthroat trout. During the winter, deer and elk can be seen on their winter range located above and down the canyon from the cabin. A short, but narrow road could lead you to Vipond Park where there are spectacular wildflowers in late June or early July.

On your way to the Canyon Creek Cabin you will pass through the old smelter town of Glendale, which consists of a few old buildings, the red brick smelter stack, and the foundations of many of the old buildings. Two cemeteries are located nearby. Most of the area around Glendale is private. The historic Canyon Creek Charcoal Kilns are located only 1 mile from the cabin. The Canyon Creek Trailhead is located 5 miles up the Canyon Creek drainage on Forest Service road #7401. From here you can access trails that lead to various lakes in the area.

Canyon Creek Cabin was built in 1930, as a guard station where rangers could stay when they were working in this area checking on cattle grazing or working on trails. It is constructed of logs, has a concrete and stone foundation and a wood floor. It is 12' x 18' with a 5' x 12' stone porch on the front. The cabin is still used intermittently by forest service crews when they are working in the area. It is equipped with a wood stove, cupboard, table, three folding chairs, and four bunk beds. The cabin is equipped with a saw, axe and some dishes, pots and pans, firewood, propane stove, and a propane lantern. The cabin has no electricity or running water. There is an outside toilet.

Canyon creek is nearby for water, but it must be treated. You can usually drive to the cabin with a 4-wheel drive vehicle, except January through March when the road may be snowed in and blocked about 6 miles from the cabin and only accessible by snowmobile, skis, or snowshoes.

ENNIS/SHERIDAN AREA

Reservations may be made via Internet: www.recreation.gov
Phone: 1-877-444-6777

Antone Cabin

The cabin is located 34 miles southeast of Dillon, Montana in the Snowcrest Range. It is available July 2, through March 31. Depending on snow conditions, snowmobile, cross country ski or snowshoe travel may be required up to 6 miles. Access is from Blacktail Road outside Dillon on Highway 91 south.

Black Butte Cabin

Located 30 miles south of Ennis, 20 miles northwest on Standard Creek road in the Gravelly Range. Depending on snow conditions, snowmobile travel may be necessary. Refer to the Visitor Travel Map regulations. This cabin is available from July 2 through March 31.

Bear Creek Cabin

Located 21 miles south of Ennis on the border of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. It is available December 1 through April 30. Several trails are available for cross-country skiing.

Bear Creek Bunkhouse

The cabin is located 21 miles south of Ennis on the border of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. It is available December 1 through April 30. Several trails are available for cross-country skiing.

West Fork Cabin

The cabin is located 40 miles south of Ennis, Montana in the Gravelly Range. Access is by road in the summer. Up to 30 miles of snowmobile or ski travel required in the winter. The cabin is available July 2 through March 31.

Wall Creek Cabin

This cabin is located 24 miles south of Ennis, Montana. It is available May 16 through December 1. The cabin is not available in the winter.

Vigilante

The cabin is located 25 miles south of Alder, Montana. Available all year, this frame house has 2 bedrooms, living room, kitchen, and electric lights. Water is not available in the fall and winter

Aquatic invasive species (AIS), including diseases, are easily spread from one water body to the other. Anglers, boaters, construction workers, pond owners, gardeners, seaplane pilots, field workers-virtually anyone who works or plays in or around water can unknowingly transport these pests on their boats and equipment or allow them to spread via improper management practices. It takes only one mistake to potentially infest a new water body. To protect Montana's waters and native aquatic species, please follow these rules and guidelines:



For more information go online to: <http://musselresponse.mt.gov>



Food Storage Requirements

Special food storage requirements are in effect forest wide and the entire Anaconda Pintler Wilderness. Bears are found throughout the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and their numbers are increasing. It is recommended that all visitors assist in the effort to prevent bears from becoming habituated to human food in order to provide for human safety, and the welfare of bears.

What Is Required?

In the Daytime – All food, attractants and refuse must be acceptably stored or attended. Attended means that someone is within 100 feet and in sight of accessible food.

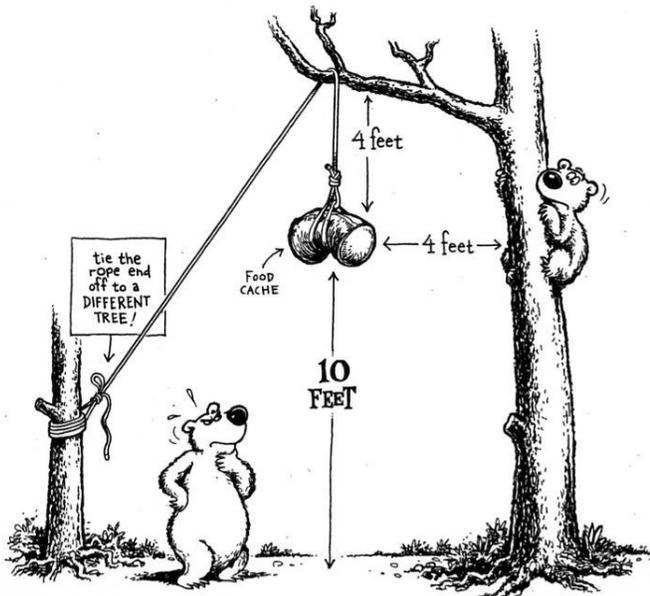
At Night – Unless being transported, eaten or prepared to be eaten, all food must be properly stored.

What Methods of Storage Are Acceptable?

To be properly stored food and other attractants may be secured in an enclosed hard sided vehicle (including pick-up camper shell or enclosed horse trailer); a certified bear resistant container; or suspended at least ten feet clear of the ground at all points and four feet horizontally from any supporting tree or pole. Certified electric fencing is also acceptable protection.

What Items Must Be Properly Stored

Anything (excluding water, baled hay, or hay cubes without additives) that can be eaten to provide nourishment, including soft drinks, canned food, alcoholic beverages, pet food, processed livestock feeds and grains, personal hygiene products (toothpaste), and refuse, including empty food and beverage containers, must be properly stored. If you use a barbeque grill, try to burn off any remaining food residue and properly store the grill at night.



For more information contact one of the following offices Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Headquarters and Dillon Ranger District

420 Barrett Street
Dillon, MT 59725
(406) 683-3900

Butte Ranger District

1820 Meadowlark Lane
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 494-2147

Madison Ranger District

5 Forest Service Road
Ennis, MT 59729
(406) 682-4253

Pintler Ranger District

88 Business Loop
Philipsburg, MT 59858
(406) 859-3211

Wisdom Ranger District

PO Box 238
Wisdom, MT 59761
(406) 689-3243

Wise River Work Center

PO Box 100
Wise River, MT 59762
(406) 832-3178

*Open May—Late November

Web: www.fs.usda.gov/bdnf

Twitter: [BvrhdRldgeNF](https://twitter.com/BvrhdRldgeNF)

Facebook:
[U.S. Forest Service: Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest](https://www.facebook.com/USForestService/Beaverhead-Deerlodge-National-Forest)

<u>CAMPGROUNDS AND PICNIC AREAS</u>	<u>SEASON</u>	<u>CAMPIN G UNITS</u>	<u>TRAILER LENGTH</u>	<u>PICNIC AREA DAY USE</u>	<u>TOILETS</u>	<u>WATER</u>	<u>BOAT LAUNCH</u>	<u>FISHING</u>	<u>GARBAGE</u>	<u>FEE</u>
DILLON AREA										
ASPEN , 12 miles north of Dillon on I-15, take Apex exit, drive west 8 miles on Birch Creek Road. Elevation 7,500'	May through October			X	X			X		
CRYSTAL PARK , 3 miles south of Dillon on I-15, take Highway 278 exit, drive west on Highway 278 for 22 miles, take Pioneer Mountains Byway Road 73 north for 17 miles. Elevation 7,700'	Mid June through Mid October					X				\$5.00 per vehicle per day
DINNER STATION , 12 miles north of Dillon on I-15, take Apex exit travel 11.5 miles west on Girch Creek Road. Elevation 7,200'.	Mid May through September	8	16'	X				X		Fee for group use
EAST CREEK , 48 miles south of Dillon on I-15 to Lima, then drive north .8 miles on frontage road, drive west 7 miles on FR 179.1, drive south .5 miles on FR 3929, drive southeast 1.5 miles on FR 3930. Elevation 7,000'	Mid May through September	4	16'		X					
GRASSHOPPER , 3 miles south of Dillon on I-15, take Highway 278 exit, Drive west on Highway 278 for 22 miles, take Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway north for 13 miles. Elevation 6,900'	June through September	24	25'	X		X		X	X	\$8.00/ night \$2.00/added vehicle. Fee for group use
PRICE CREEK , 3 miles south of Dillon on I-15, take Highway 278 exit, drive west on Highway 278 for 22 miles, take the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway for 16 miles. Take FR 2406 for ¼ mile. Elevation 7,600'	Mid June through September	28	30'			X			X	\$8.00/night \$2.00/added Vehicle Fee for group use
RESERVOIR LAKE , 19 miles south of Dillon on I-15, take Highway 324 west 17 miles, take FR 181 for 18 miles. Elevation 7,000'.	Mid June through September	16	16'	X		X	X	X		\$8.00/ \$2.00/added vehicle Fee for group use
SACAJAWEA MEMORIAL , 19 miles south of Dillon on I-15, take Highway 324 west for 12 miles to Grant, continue on Highway 324 for 10 miles, turn west on FR 3909 for 12 miles. Elevation 7,400	Mid June through mid September	2	20'	X						

CAMPGROUNDS AND PICNIC AREAS	SEASON	CAMPING UNITS	TRAILER LENGTH	PICNIC AREA DAY USE	TOILETS	WATER	BOAT LAUNCH	FISHING	GARBAGE	FEE
WISE RIVER AREA										
BOULDER CREEK , 13 miles south of Wise River on the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Elevation 6,400'	June through September	13	30'	X		X		X		\$8.00/night \$2.00/added vehicle
CANYON CREEK , west of Melrose 13 Miles on FR 187, then southeast 4.5 miles on FR 7401. Elevation 7,300	Mid June through September	3	14'	X	X			X		
FOURTH OF JULY , 12 miles south of Wise River on Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Elevation 6,400'	June through September	6	30'	X		X		X		\$8.00/night \$2.00/added vehicle
LITTLE JOE , 21 miles south of Wise River on Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Elevation 6,800'	June through September	5	28'	X		X		X		\$8.00/night \$2.00/added Vehicle
LODGEPOLE , 13 miles south of Wise River on Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Elevation 6'400'	June through September	10	30'	X		X		X		\$8.00/night \$2.00/added Vehicle
LUPINE SHELTER , 24 miles south of Wise River on Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Elevation 7,600'	Summer/ Winter		30'	X						Fee for group use
MONO CREEK , 22 miles south of Wise River on Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway, take FR 2465 southeast 1 mile. Elevation 7,000'	June through September	5	18'	X		X		X		\$8.00/night, \$2.00/added vehicle
PETTENGILL , 10 miles south of Wise River on Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway Elevation 6250'	June through September	3	24'					X		\$6.00/night, \$2.00/added vehicle
PINTLER , 30 miles west of Wise River On Highway 43, take FR 185 north 12 Miles. Elevation 6,300'	Mid June through September	3	20'	X	X	X		X		
SEYMOUR CREEK , 11 miles west of Wise River on Highway 43, take Highway 569 north for 4 miles, take FR 934 northwest for 8 miles. Elevation 6,700'	Mid June through September	17	18'	X	X	X		X		
WILLOW , 14 miles south of Wise River on Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Elevation 6,600'	June through September	5	20'			X		X		\$8.00/night, \$2.00/added vehicle

CAMPGROUNDS AND PICNIC AREAS	SEASON	CAMPING UNITS	TRAILER LENGTH	PICNIC AREA DAY USE	TOILETS	WATER	BOAT LAUNCH	FISHING	GARBAGE	FEE
WISDOM AREA										
MAY CREEK , 17 miles west of Wisdom on Highway 43. Elevation 6,300'	Mid June through September	21	30'			X		X		\$7.00/night \$2.00/added vehicle
MINER LAKE , .5 mile south of Jackson On Highway 278, take county road 182 west 6 ¾ miles, then go west 3 ¼ miles on FR 182. Elevation 7,000	Mid June through September	18	20'		X	X	X	X		\$7.00/night \$2.00/added vehicle
MUSSIGBROD , 1 mile west of Wisdom on Highway 43, take Lower North Fork Road north 7.5 miles, take FR 573 for 10 miles. Elevation 6,500'	Mid June through September	10	30'				X	X		\$7.00/night \$2.00/added vehicle
N. VAN HOUTEN , 1 ½ miles south of Jackson on Highway 278. Take FR 181 for 10.5 miles. Elevation 6,700'	June through September	7	20'				X	X		
S. VAN HOUTEN , 1 ½ miles south of Jackson on Highway 278. Take FR 181 for 10.5 miles. Elevation 6,700'	June through September	3	30'			X		X		
STEEL CREEK , ¼ mile north of Wisdom, take Steel Creek Road for 9 miles. Elevation 6,200'	June through September	7	22'			X		X		
TWIN LAKES , 7 miles south of Wisdom On Highway 278, take Briston Lane Road 7 miles. Take FR 945 for 5 miles. Elevation 7,200'	Mid June through September	21	25'	X		X	X	X		\$7.00/night \$2.00/added vehicle
ENNIS/SHERIDAN AREA										
BEAR CREEK , 10 miles south of Ennis on Highway 287. Take Bear Creek Road east 10 miles. Elevation 6,350'	Early June through late November	12	28'	X	X	X				
BRANHAM LAKE , 13 miles east of Sheriday on Mill Creek Road. Road not recommended for trailers. Elevation 8,800'	Early July through late September	6		X		X	X	X		
CLIFF POINT , 37 miles southwest of Ennis on Highway 287. Take FR 241 west for 5 miles. Elevation 6,400'	Mid May to mid September	6	16'		X	X	X	X	Yes + Bear Resistant Food Storage Boxes Avail	\$15.00/night

<u>CAMPGROUNDS AND PICNIC AREAS</u>	SEASON	CAMPING UNITS	TRAILER LENGTH	<u>PICNIC AREA</u> DAY USE	TOILETS	WATER	BOAT LAUNCH	FISHING	GARBAGE	FEE
CLOVER MEADOW , 1.5 miles southwest of Ennis on Highway 287, take Varney Road south 10 miles, take Call Road 292 southwest 12 miles, take Gravelly Range Road south for 8 miles. Elevation 6,360'	Early July through late September	10		X	X					
COTTONWOOD , 8 miles south of Sheridan on highway 287. At Alder take Ruby Reservoir Road south for 36 miles Elevation 6,360	Late May to late November	10	28'							
ELK LAKE , 50 miles east of Monida on Red Rock Lake National Wildlife Refuge Road, 23 miles west of Henry's Lake, Idaho via Red Rock Pass. Elevation 6,400'	Mid May through mid October	2		X	X		X	X	No, Bear Resistant Food Storage Boxes Avail	
HILLTOP , 37 miles south of Ennis on Highway 287. Take FR 241 west for 5 miles. Elevation 6,800'	Late May through mid September	18	22'		X	X		X	Yes + Bear Resistant Food Storage Boxes Avail.	\$15.00/night
MADISON RIVER , 34 miles south of Ennis on Highway 287. Elevation 6,000	Late May through mid October	10	30'			X		X	Yes + Bear Resistant Food Storage Boxes Avail	\$15.00/night
MILL CREEK , 7 miles east of Sheridan on Mill Creek Road. Elevation 6,480'	Late May through late September	10	22'		X	X	X		X	
POTOSI , 7 miles west of Harrison on Pony Road. At Pony take South Willow Creek Road south 10 miles. Elevation 6,200'	Late May through mid September	15	22'	X	X	X		X		
RIVERVIEW , 34 miles south of Ennis on Highway 287. Elevation. 6,000'	Late May through mid October	24	30'			X		X	X	\$15.00/night
W. FORK CAMP , 34 miles south of Ennis on Highway 287 (9 miles west of Madison River Canyon Earthquake slide). Elevation 6,000'	Late May through mid September	7	No Trailers		X	X		X	X	\$12.00/night
WADE LAKE , 37 miles south of Ennis on Highway 287. Take FR 241 west for 5 miles. Elevation 6,400'	Early June through Labor Day	27	30'	X		X	X	X	Yes + Bear Resistant Food Storage Boxes Avail	\$15.00/night

Additional Information:

1. Firewood is available at some campground and picnic area locations. Deadfall should be utilized for firewood. Please do not cut live standing timber, shrubs, and other vegetation.
2. Water from campground and picnic area water systems is safe for drinking. However, other water may be contaminated and should always be properly treated before consumption.
3. There are no areas designated for swimming. Lifeguards are not provided at any facilities, swim at your own risk.
4. Recreation Passports are available to eligible visitors for discounts on campground fees. Contact any Forest Service Office for details.

**Remember, the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest is Bear Country!
You must follow all food and attractant storage requirements.**

All attractants must be acceptably stored unless transporting, eating, or preparing. Acceptably stored means:

- Suspended at least 10 feet high and 4 feet from any verticle support;
- Stored in a certified bear-resistant container; or
- Secured in a hard-sided vehicle (including a fully enclosed camper or horse trailer).

Updated: June 4, 2020