



# Lake Sherwood Rehabilitation

## Virtual Meeting Summary Report

*Hosted by the Marlinton/White Sulphur Ranger District*

*April 13 & 15, 2021*

*6:00 PM - 7:30 PM EDT*

### Background

Lake Sherwood Recreation Area is one of the most visited sites on the Monongahela National Forest. With more than 30,000 visitors each year, Lake Sherwood has been a destination for families seeking day and overnight recreation opportunities since it opened in 1959.

Recently, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) established funding to address deferred maintenance of recreation sites across federal lands, including national forests. For Fiscal Year 2021, the Forest Service received funding to implement several deferred maintenance projects at the Lake Sherwood Recreation Area such as installation of a new water well and replacement of several restroom facilities in the campground.

While this work will greatly improve the quality of visitor experience at Lake Sherwood, the Forest Service recognizes there may be additional changes needed for a sustainable future. To better understand stakeholder needs and desires, the Marlinton/White Sulphur Ranger District held two virtual meetings in April 2021. The meetings were the first step of a collaborative approach to develop a long-term management strategy for the Lake Sherwood Recreation Area. The input gathered through these meetings is being used to make decisions about priorities for maintenance and management of the Lake Sherwood Recreation Area for both the near- and long-term.

### Introductory Presentation & Comments

The meeting began with an introductory presentation by Cynthia Sandeno, Marlinton/White Sulphur District Ranger, and Matthew Edwards, Marlinton/White Sulphur Ranger District Recreation Manager. They offered the following comments:

- ♦ The Lake Sherwood Recreation Area has been a well-loved recreation destination for over sixty years.
- ♦ Lake Sherwood is visited by more than 30,000 people/year. Annual fee revenue is approximately \$100k, with operations costs exceeding \$125k. Deferred maintenance needs for facilities alone total more than \$750k.

## Introductory Presentation & Comments (continued)

- ♦ Approximately 40% of the facilities at Lake Sherwood were built from 1966-1972 and are in need of replacement.
- ♦ In addition to aging facilities, there have been a number of other management challenges in recent years, including the spread of water-shield across many parts of the lake.
- ♦ The Great American Outdoors Act provides a wonderful funding opportunity to address deferred maintenance and repair projects at Lake Sherwood.
- ♦ For Fiscal Year 2021, the Forest Service received funding to implement many projects (new water well, replacement of toilet facilities, beach area & amphitheater improvements, treatment of water-shield & removal of cattails to improve lake conditions).
- ♦ There may be additional opportunities to complete other priority maintenance work at Lake Sherwood.
- ♦ A key goal of the meetings is to better understand stakeholder needs and desires to plan for short- *and* long-term management Lake Sherwood.

## Topic 1: Qualities to Endure

***In your opinion, what about Lake Sherwood must endure for the future? What characteristics, qualities, activities, or other conditions are important to you and must be sustained or preserved into the future?***

- ♦ The lake needs to be preserved and should be the #1 priority. The water-shield is a detriment and makes it difficult to enjoy fishing and other water-based activities. Water quality must be maintained (liming application has resulted in positive outcomes).
- ♦ Maintaining the serenity of the recreation area is important. Keep camping and boating "electric free." Preserve nature's "night sounds."
- ♦ Fishing quality is important. The Forest Service should consider these measures to improve the overall fishing experience: making the lake "catch and release" only, increased stocking, implementing possession limits/size limits.
- ♦ The natural, forested setting and the remoteness of the site are important draws.
- ♦ Stakeholders value the sense of community and security while at Lake Sherwood.
- ♦ The proximity of the campsites to the lake is ideal.
- ♦ The campground should remain under Forest Service management (rather than under operation by a permittee).
- ♦ Overall, stakeholders don't want much to change about the area. It is "good the way it is."

## Topic 2: Need for Change

***In your opinion, what about Lake Sherwood must change for the future? How would these changes better serve the public?***

- ♦ The addition of a general store for camper necessities would be greatly valued.
- ♦ Recycling bins for bottles and cans would be a great addition.

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**Topic 2: Need for Change (continued)**

***In your opinion, what about Lake Sherwood must change for the future? How would these changes better serve the public?***

- ♦ Modest recreation fee increases could be supported if they help maintain the area and are presented in a transparent manner.
- ♦ Tidy up the two islands.
- ♦ Improve trail conditions and accessibility.
- ♦ Upgrade fire pits.
- ♦ Update & improve shower facilities (hotter water, replace fixtures/shower valve, longertimer limits to avoid having to repeatedly hit the "on" button)
- ♦ Consider adding electrical hookups to some of the campsites (would reduce the amount of generator noise).
- ♦ Lengthen campsite spurs to accommodate larger vehicles (remove bollards).
- ♦ Add sewer hook-ups for campground hosts to improve their quality of stay.
- ♦ Add a kids' playset/playground for each camp loop.
- ♦ Consider lengthening generator hours (from 10am-6pm --> 9am-7pm).
- ♦ Consider providing Wi-Fi (possibly at beach house).
- ♦ Need some new bridges and culverts.
- ♦ Add several potable water spigots throughout the campground loops (especially for the "outer campsites").
- ♦ Replace roofs of existing facilities.
- ♦ Maintenance to remove vegetative growth intruding upon ends of the beach.
- ♦ Water access during the shoulder season via the hand pumps.

**Topic 3: Top Maintenance Priorities**

***What are your top three priorities for maintenance or repair work at Lake Sherwood?***

- ♦ Any projects to improve fishing and hiking activities at Lake Sherwood and the surrounding area (trail maintenance).
- ♦ Improved fishing (stocking).
- ♦ Newer, larger picnic tables in all campsites (reference table design @ site #17).
- ♦ Replacement of fire rings/grills in all campsites with a modified design (shorter).
- ♦ Reconstruct/redefine tent pads.
- ♦ Installation/maintenance of water fountains.
- ♦ Shower valve replacement.
- ♦ Removal of water-shield & cattails.
- ♦ Road maintenance - limb up trees along the campground loop roads to accommodate for larger and taller vehicles.
- ♦ Provide cell service for emergencies, or an accessible phone for visitor use.
- ♦ Additional water spigots.

## Questions from Public Participants

### ***What is the campground occupancy rate?***

A - The average annual occupancy rate for the Lake Sherwood campground is 51%. This is based on total available sites during the entire length of the open season. Below is additional occupancy information:

- Highest Monthly Occupancy – July 55%
- Lowest Monthly Occupancy- Aug 28%
- Number of days the campground is at 100% occupancy - 28 days

## Close-Out

The meeting close-out emphasized the following points:

- ♦ The meeting input will help inform future project proposals for Great American Outdoors Act funding.
- ♦ The meeting input will inform the development of a long-term management strategy for the Lake Sherwood Recreation Area.
- ♦ Volunteers and partnerships are critical to the long-term sustainability of Lake Sherwood. As we move forward, we invite interested stakeholders to stay engaged by sending a short email of interest to [sm.fs.lakesherwood@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.lakesherwood@usda.gov).