

APPENDIX Q

Visitor Use Standards and Indicators

Alternatives C and F (Preferred Alternative)

Topic: Opportunities for Boaters

Indicators, Desired Future Conditions, Standards and Actions to manage visitor use opportunities within Limits of Acceptable Change without invoking a permit system or allocation of use.

Indicator 1. Sight and sound levels that create opportunities for privacy, solitude, and a primitive boating and camping experience.

Desired Future Condition

Maintain use opportunities without constraint of a permit system (other than a self-registration permit) and allocation of visitor use. Visitors will have the opportunity to periodically experience moments of solitude on some portion of their trip. Visitors will have the opportunity to camp in primitive sites that reflect natural qualities of the river environment.

Standard

Two occurrences of 170 people launching per day (based on a running 3-day average) from a total of all sites located between the Chouteau County Fairgrounds Campground and Canoe Launch, and Coal Banks Landing.

Three occurrences of 100 people launching per day (based on a running 3-day average) from a total of all sites located between Judith Landing and the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Monitoring

Analysis of boater registration data.

Management Actions

The following is a list of actions managers could select from as needed to maintain the sight and sound standard. Other actions may be developed as needed to adapt to changes in visitor use patterns.

- Create a web-based mandatory registration system that would provide information to potential boaters

regarding high use launch days. This would allow boaters the option of selecting dates outside of busy timeframes.

- Encourage boaters to stagger launches at the put-in (don't launch until the group in front of you is out of sight and sound) and when leaving camp on subsequent days.
- Encourage groups of boaters to stay in a compact flotilla. Discourage boaters from spreading out with wide distances between boats in the same party.
- From June 15 to August 1, require groups larger than 20 people camping between Coal Banks Landing and Judith Landing to camp only in Level 2 sites, and begin to identify Level 4 camping opportunities on the floater maps.
- From June 15 to August 1 limit all groups to a one-night stay at any Level 2, 3 or 4 site between Coal Banks Landing and the James Kipp Recreation Area.
- Pursue purchase or lease of sites to develop additional Level 2 or 3 camping opportunities.
- Develop additional Level 3 primitive boat camps on existing public land.
- Construct additional Level 2 sites in areas where visual integrity could be maintained.
- Require groups of 20 people or larger to acquire an SRP with stipulations on date they can launch and where they can camp.
- Develop and implement a group size limit of 20 people. If this group size limit does not effectively reduce impacts then smaller group size limits may be considered.

Indicator 2. The condition class of Level 2, 3 and 4 sites (excellent, good, fair, poor).

Desired Future Condition

The Upper Missouri River will have a diverse set of camping and visitor opportunities and there will be fair access to campsites among all types of users. Campsites along the river will reflect natural qualities and have minimal congestion. A range of camping opportunities will be present throughout the river corridor.

Standard

All Level 2, 3, and 4 sites will be in fair or better condition.

Monitoring

Measure the disturbance to individual campsites. Campsite monitoring will take place in August and September. Level 3 and 4 sites in designated wild and scenic sections will be monitored each year. Level 3 and 4 sites in designated recreation sections will be monitored every 2 years. Level 2 sites in any designated section will be monitored every 2 years.

Management Actions

As needed to maintain class standard:

- Aggressively promote Leave No Trace standards and use of existing sites.
- Promote use of Level 2 sites (concentrate use).
- Modify current Level 2 sites to provide for screening and privacy and provide surface hardening in areas of high use (fire rings, restrooms, social trails).
- Rest and rotate individual sites.
- Close and rehabilitate individual sites.
- Purchase short-term leases from private landowners to create additional Level 3 and 4 opportunities.
- Develop additional Level 3 and 4 sites on existing public land.

Indicator 3. River corridor riparian health assessment score.

Desired Future Condition

Sites for potential riparian habitat will be in proper functioning condition and following natural succession. Native vegetation will be present throughout the river corridor without competition from exotic, invasive species. Soil erosion and compaction from human use is minimized and areas around campsites support natural vegetation. Return of natural flows and less impact from man-made controls.

Standard

A score of 80%, or health in an upward trend.

Monitoring

Riparian health assessment.

Management Actions

Actions would occur when visitor use is determined to be the major impacting factor.

- Rest/rotate Level 3 and 4 sites.
- Close Level 3 and 4 sites as necessary.

Indicator 4. The condition class or rating of homestead historical interpretive sites (rating to be developed).

Desired Future Condition

Condition of homesteads will be adequate to maintain eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

Standard

A quantitative rating or score that preserves the historic and interpretive value of the time period in which the homestead was established.

Monitoring

Establish a baseline rating or score with parameters indicative of condition of building interior, exterior, contents and surrounding grounds. Monitoring will be completed at the end of each season of use.

Management Actions

As needed to maintain historic and interpretive value. Actions would occur when visitor use is determined to be the major impacting factor:

- Develop a sign-in log book.
- Develop and post a list of visitor use restrictions.
- Close doors to interior building access.
- Develop exclosures to keep visitors away from buildings.
- Close sites to visitor use.

Indicator 5. Increase of weed infestations adjacent to or within recreation sites and trails.

Desired Future Condition

Major trails and other high use areas will be free of weed infestations.

Standard

No increase of weed infestations beyond baseline.

Monitoring

Annual assessment and inventory.

Management Actions

As needed to maintain weed infestation standards:

- Aggressive visitor education program.
- Chemical and biological treatment.
- Closure of campsites and trails in highly infested areas.

Alternative D

Topic: Opportunities for Boaters

Indicators, Desired Future Conditions, Standards and Actions to manage visitor use opportunities within Limits of Acceptable Change.

Indicator 1. Sight and sound levels that create opportunities for privacy, solitude, and a primitive boating and camping experience

Desired Future Condition

Visitors will have the opportunity to experience solitude, free from sight and sound of other groups, on some portion of their trip. Visitors will have the opportunity to camp in primitive sites that reflect natural qualities of the river environment.

Standard

One occurrence of 170 people launching per day (based on a running 3-day average) from a total of all sites located between the Chouteau County Fairgrounds Campground and Canoe Launch, and Coal Banks Landing.

Two occurrences of 100 people launching per day (based on a running 3-day average) from a total of all sites located between Judith Landing and the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Monitoring

Analysis of boater registration data.

Management Actions

The following is a list of actions managers could select as needed to maintain the sight and sound standard. Other actions may be developed as needed to adapt to changes in visitor use patterns.

- Create a web-based mandatory registration system that would provide information to potential boaters regarding high use launch days. This would allow boaters the option of selecting dates outside of busy timeframes.
- Encourage boaters to stagger launches at the put-in (don't launch until the group in front is out of sight and sound) and when leaving camp on subsequent days.
- Encourage groups of boaters to stay in a compact flotilla. Discourage boaters from spreading out with wide distances between boats in the same party.
- From June 15 to August 1, require groups larger than 20 people to launch on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday.
- From June 15 to August 1, require groups larger than 20 people camping between Coal Banks Landing and Judith Landing to camp only in Level 2 sites, and begin to identify Level 4 camping opportunities on the floater maps.
- From June 15 to August 1, limit all groups to a one-night stay at any Level 2, 3 or 4 site between Coal Banks Landing and the James Kipp Recreation Area.
- Pursue purchase or lease of sites to develop additional Level 2 and 3 camping opportunities.
- Develop additional Level 3 primitive boat camps on existing public land.
- Construct additional Level 2 sites in areas where visual integrity could be maintained.
- Require groups of 20 people or larger to acquire an SRP with stipulations on the date they can launch and where they can camp.
- Develop and implement a group size limit of 20 people. If this group size limit does not effectively reduce impacts, then smaller group size limits may be considered.
- Develop and implement a temporary, one-time emergency allocation system.
- Develop and implement a seasonal allocation system (e.g., June 15 to August 1).

- Develop and implement an allocation only for the White Cliffs section of the river.
- Develop and implement a river-wide allocation system.

Indicator 2. The condition class of Level 2, 3 and 4 sites (excellent, good, fair, poor).

Desired Future Condition

The Upper Missouri River will contain a diverse set of camping and visitor opportunities and there will be fair access to campsites among all types of users. Campsites along the river will reflect natural qualities and have minimal congestion. A range of camping opportunities will be present from Fort Benton to Judith Landing. From Judith Landing to the James Kipp Recreation Area opportunities for primarily primitive camping will be present.

Standard

All Level 3 and 4 sites in the designated wild and scenic sections will be in good or excellent condition. All Level 3 and 4 sites in designated recreation sections will be in fair or better condition. Level 2 sites in any designated section will be in fair or better condition.

Monitoring

Measure the disturbance to individual campsites. Campsite monitoring will be conducted in August and September. Level 3 and 4 sites in designated wild and scenic sections will be monitored each year. Level 3 and 4 sites in designated recreation sections will be monitored every 2 years. Level 2 sites in any designated section will be monitored every 2 years.

Management Actions

As needed to maintain class standard:

- Aggressively promote Leave No Trace standards and use of existing sites.
- Promote use of current Level 2 sites (concentrate use).
- Modify current Level 2 sites to provide for screening and privacy and provide surface hardening in areas of high use (fire rings, restrooms, social trails).
- Rest and rotate individual sites.
- Close and rehabilitate individual sites.
- Develop a maximum group size for Level 3 and 4 sites.

- Purchase short-term leases from private landowners to create additional Level 3 and 4 opportunities.

Indicator 3. River corridor riparian health assessment score

Desired Future Condition

Sites for potential riparian habitat will be in proper functioning condition and following natural succession. Native vegetation will be present throughout the river corridor without competition from exotic, invasive species. Soil erosion and compaction from human use is minimized and areas around campsites support natural vegetation. Return of natural flows and less impact from man-made controls.

Standard

A score of 80%, or health in an upward trend.

Monitoring

Riparian health assessment.

Management Actions

Actions would occur when visitor use is determined to be the major impacting factor.

- Rest/rotate Level 3 and 4 sites.
- Close Level 3 and 4 sites as necessary.

Indicator 4. The condition class or rating of homestead historical interpretive sites

Desired Future Condition

Condition of homesteads will be adequate to maintain eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

Standard

A quantitative rating or score that preserves the historic and interpretive value of the time period in which the homestead was established.

Monitoring

Establish a baseline rating or score with parameters indicative of condition of building interior, exterior, contents and surrounding grounds. Monitoring will be completed at the end of each season of use.

Management Actions

As needed to maintain historic and interpretive value:

- Develop a sign-in log book.
- Develop and post a list of visitor use restrictions.
- Close doors to interior building access.
- Develop exclosures to keep visitors away from buildings.
- Close sites to visitor use.

Indicator 5. Increase of weed infestations adjacent to or within recreation sites and trails

Desired Future Condition

Major trails and other high use areas will be free of weed infestations.

Standard

No increase of weed infestations beyond baseline.

Monitoring

Annual Assessment and Inventory.

Management Actions

As needed to maintain weed infestation standards:

- Aggressive visitor education program.
- Chemical and biological treatment.
- Closure of campsites and trails in highly infested areas.

