

We Want More of This...



And Less of This....

The New York Times

Pandemic Crowds Bring 'Rivergeddon' to Montana's Rivers

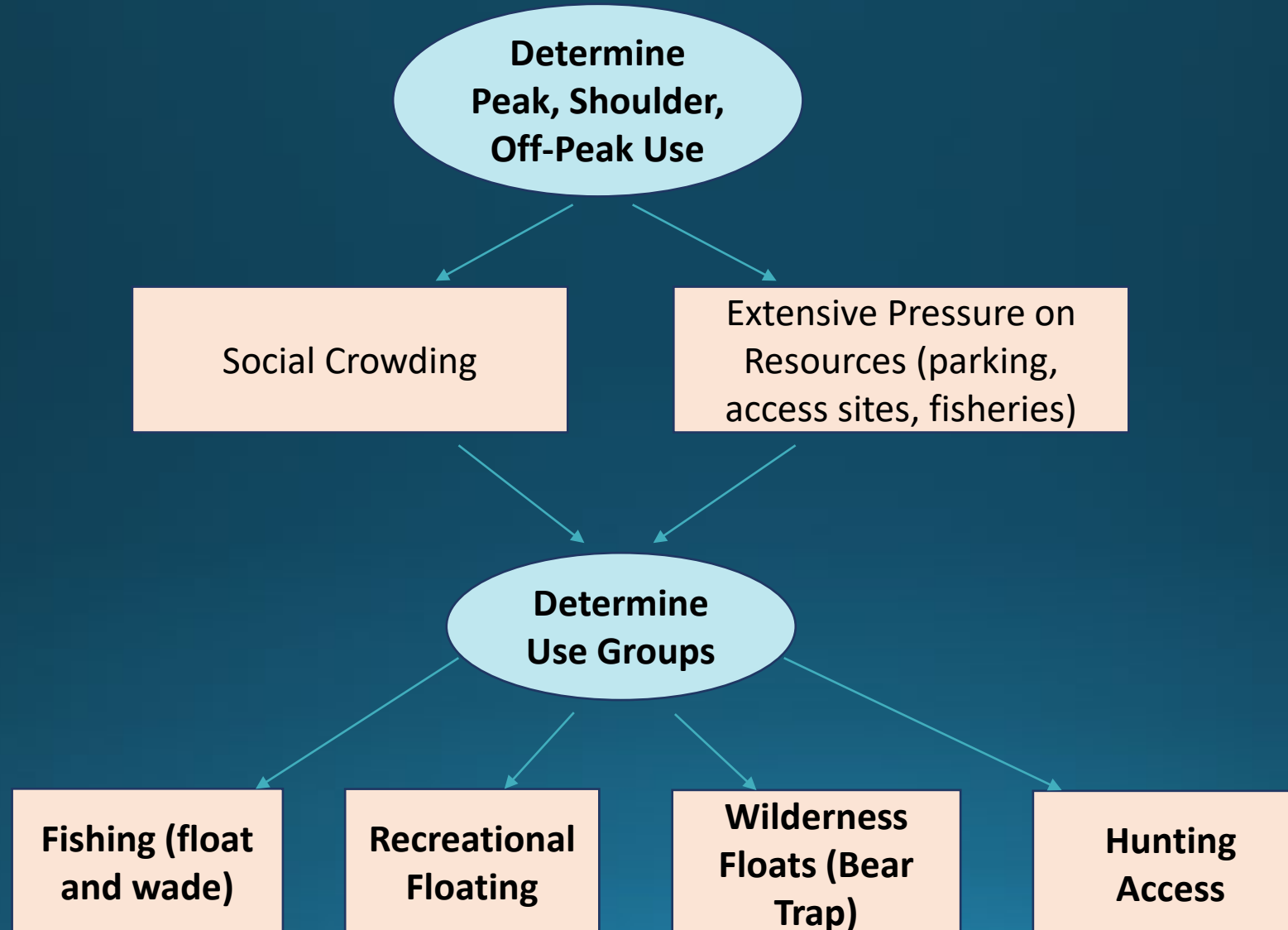
As urbanites flock to forests and rivers to escape coronavirus threats, trailheads are cramped with parked cars and fishing on the Madison River is like a Disneyland ride.



Angling Trade E-Survey: Has Montana Lost Its MOJO?

Absurd boat ramp traffic jams... plummeting fish-per-mile counts on fabled rivers... absentee owners blowing up the real estate market... recurring threats to stream access... heck, even Tom McGuane said in a recent New Yorker interview, "I've had a long romance with Montana, but it's one I find harder to grasp every year." What's the story here?

Madison River Recreation Planning Workflow



**Determine Need for
Peak, Shoulder, Off-
Peak Use**

Peak Season

- Highest current levels of use
- May have higher capacity for use (higher flows, etc)
- May need limits now for some users

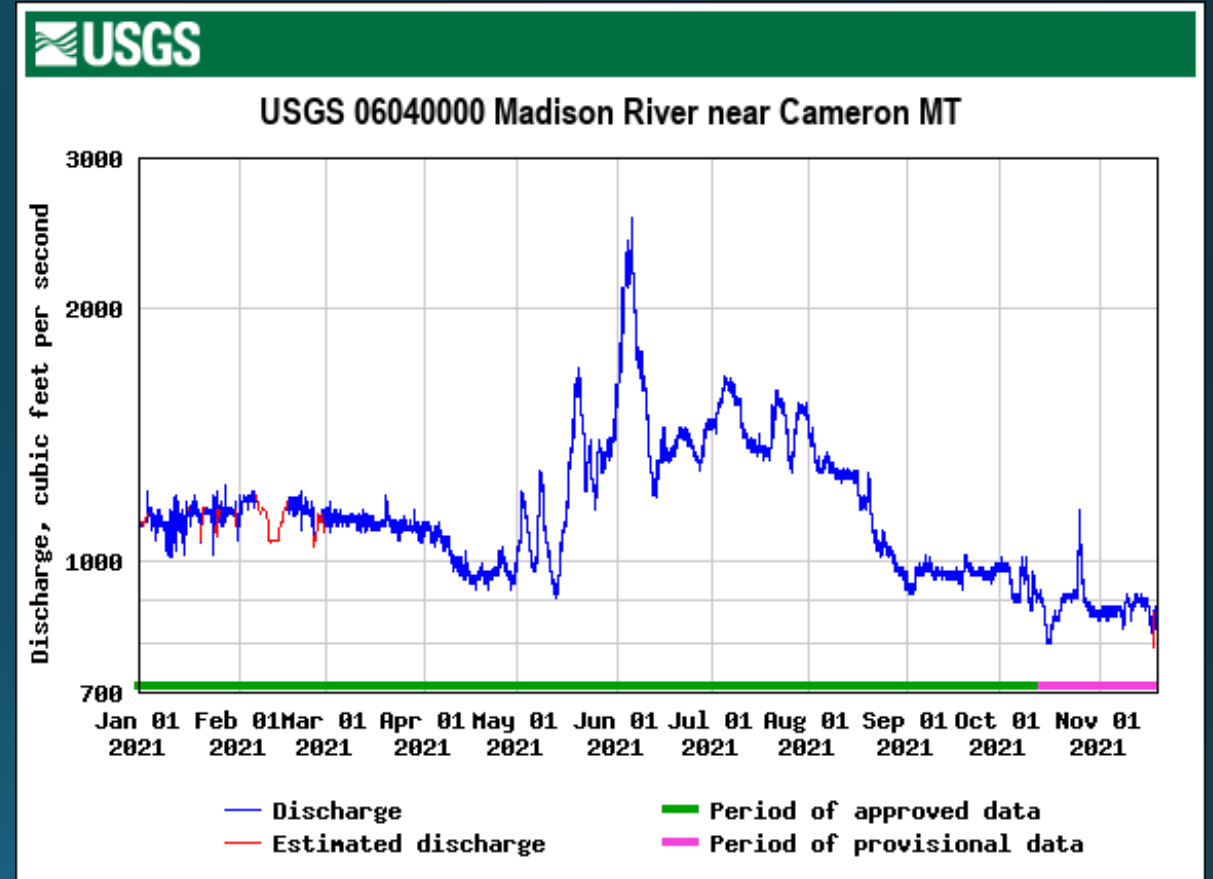
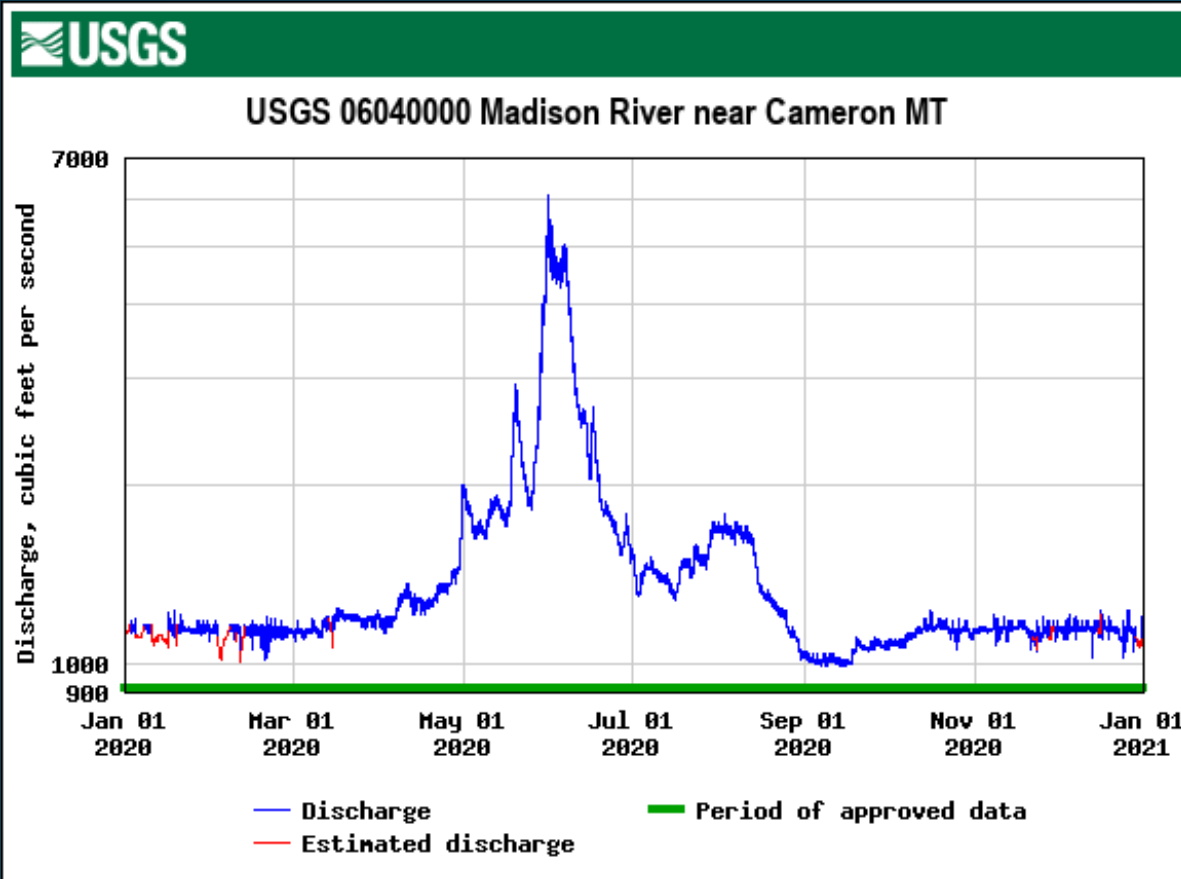
Shoulder Season

- May have a lower capacity for use due to lower flows, spawning windows, runoff, etc.
- May or may not be at capacity now

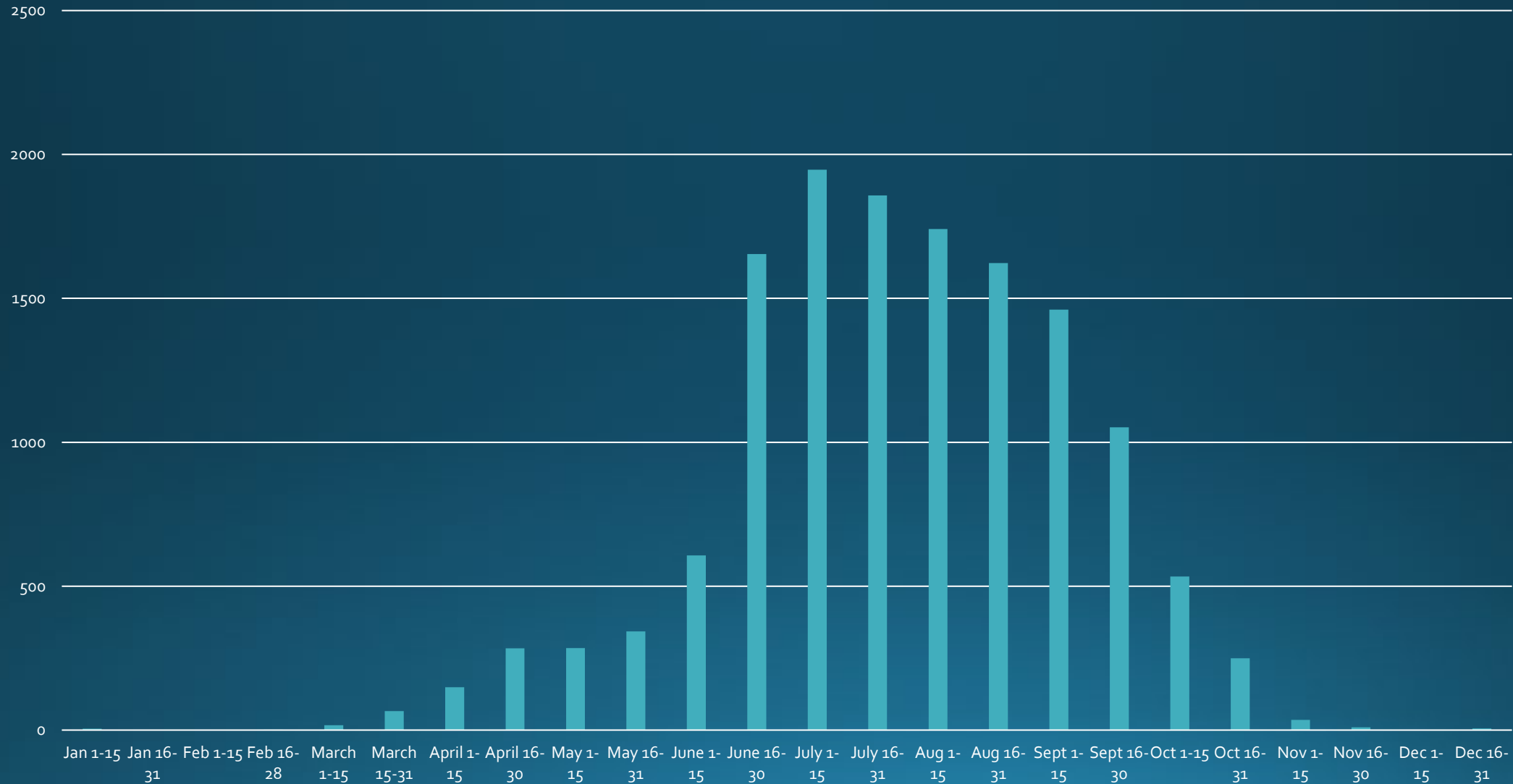
Off Peak

- Current recreation levels low, may be below capacity
- Recreation may not be relevant
- May not require permit for some users

Flows by Season Impact Fishing Capacity



Current Levels of Use Differ Seasonally (2019 Guided Fishing Trips)



**Determine
Capacity for
Each Use**

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graph TD; A([Determine Capacity for Each Use]) --> B[Develop Seasons and Capacities for Each Use Group:]; B --> C[1. If capacities change by season define capacity for Peak, Shoulder and Off Peak]; B --> D[2. Consider if should be prioritized for a higher density in some reaches (example fishing density high priority YNP to Ennis Lake, recreational floating Warm to Blacks in July/August), etc]; B --> E[3. Consider both social issues and in some cases impact on resources such as fisheries when defining capacities (example fishing during spawn, etc).];
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Develop Seasons and Capacities for Each Use Group:

1. If capacities change by season define capacity for Peak, Shoulder and Off Peak
2. Consider if should be prioritized for a higher density in some reaches (example fishing density high priority YNP to Ennis Lake, recreational floating Warm to Blacks in July/August), etc
3. Consider both social issues and in some cases impact on resources such as fisheries when defining capacities (example fishing during spawn, etc).

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graph TD; A([Implement Use Limits or Set Triggers]) --> B[Set Use Restrictions If Use At/Near Capacity]; A --> C[Define Triggers if Use Below Capacity];
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Implement Use Limits or Set Triggers

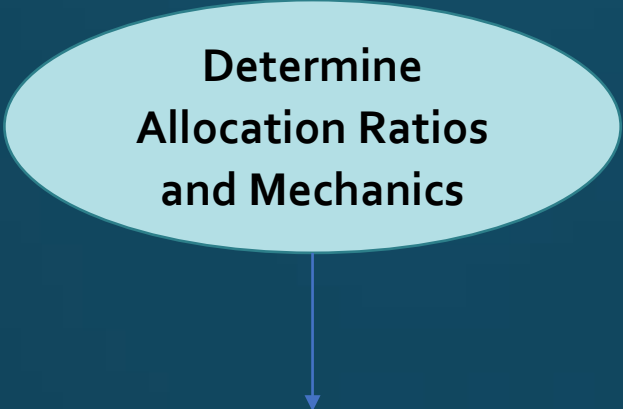
Set Use Restrictions If Use At/Near Capacity

For those uses expected to be at/near capacity in 2023 implement management mechanisms to restrict use to a set capacity

Define Triggers if Use Below Capacity

For uses groups/seasons where current use is likely to be below capacity in 2023, define use levels that would trigger future restrictions to manage use to capacity

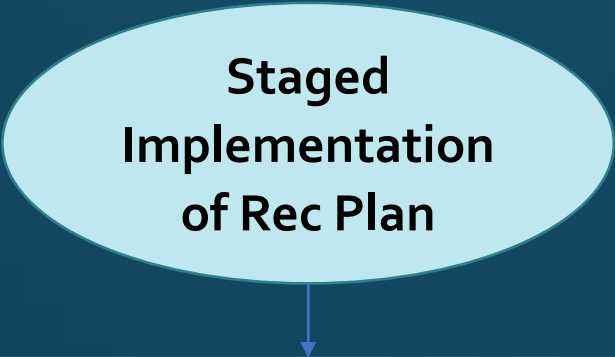
**Determine
Allocation Ratios
and Mechanics**



**Determine Allocation Ratios and Mechanics That Ensure Use Levels Remain at or Below
Recreational Capacities**

1. Determine how use limits split amongst guided users, unguided users, livery rentals
2. Determine allocation method for each type (guided trip limits, livery rental limits, online reservation day pass system for unguided, etc.)
3. Consider any exceptions during capped windows for unguided users: (example wade fishing season pass for residents, no passes required after 4pm)

Staged Implementation of Rec Plan



Staged Implementation

1. 2022 begin designing reservation system
2. 2023 Commercial limits go into effect
3. 2024 non-guided users required to have daily rec pass reserved online – no limit first year to de bug and focus on education (First year helps refine data on total use for non-guided users AND provides data on WHEN users order their day passes)
4. 2025 Implement non-guided day pass allocation BUT with pass allocation 25% higher than targeted use to account for difference between passes reserved and actual use
5. 2026 allocation of passes set to target the defined recreation capacity

Regular Adaptive Management



Regular Ongoing Adaptive Management

1. Continue to monitor actual recreational use levels, satisfaction levels, and fisheries data
2. Calibrate day pass system annually (not all day passes that are reserved will get used; calibrate day pass sales to actual use)
3. When use groups that are under capacity reach trigger points, implement new limits to ensure that use is managed to remain at or below capacities.
4. If recreation use drops to a trigger point significantly below a set capacity, consider relieving use restrictions
5. Make adjustments to recreational capacities if significant degradation to resources occur