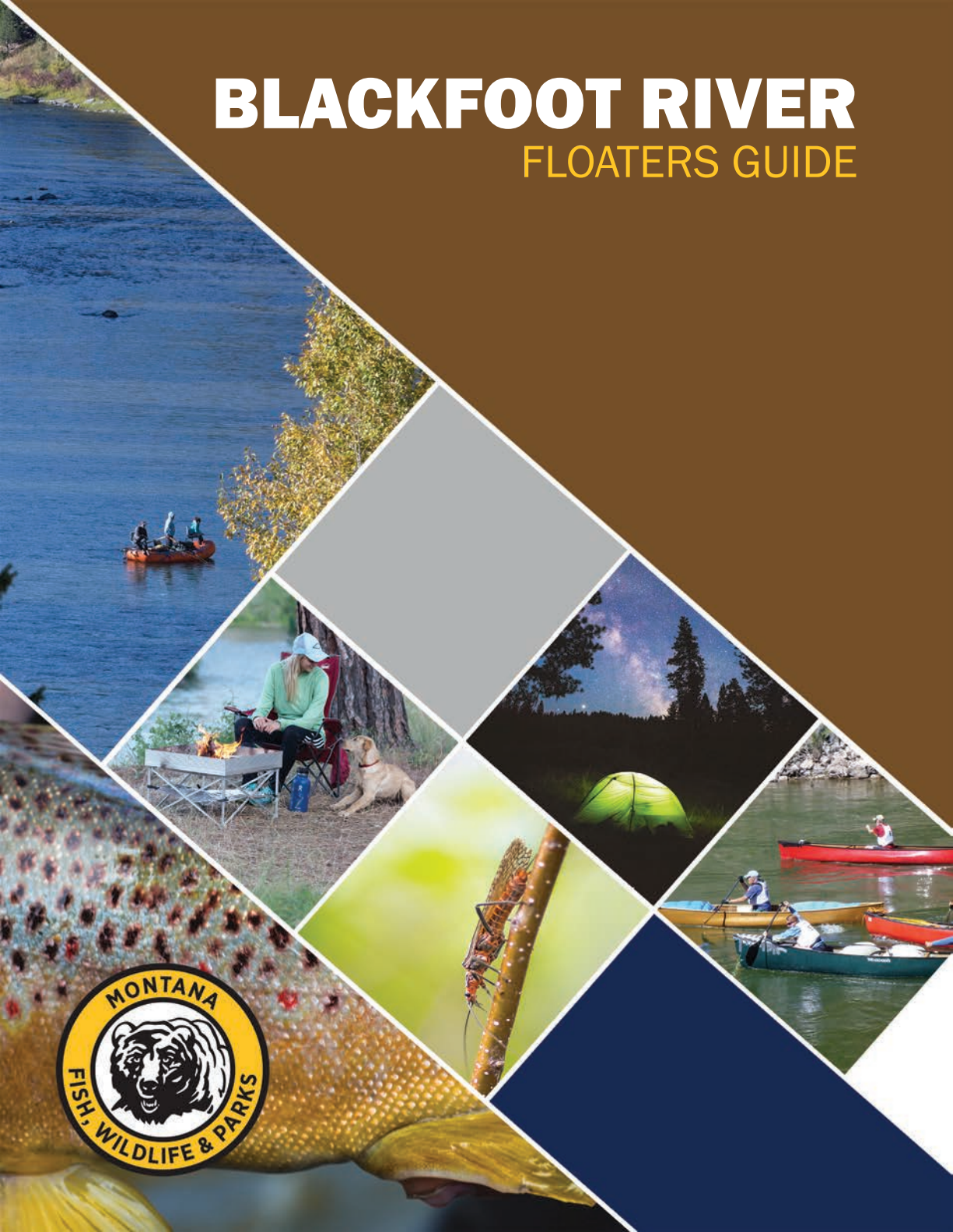


BLACKFOOT RIVER

FLOATERS GUIDE





Developed by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Photography by Cannon Colegrove



BLACKFOOT RIVER



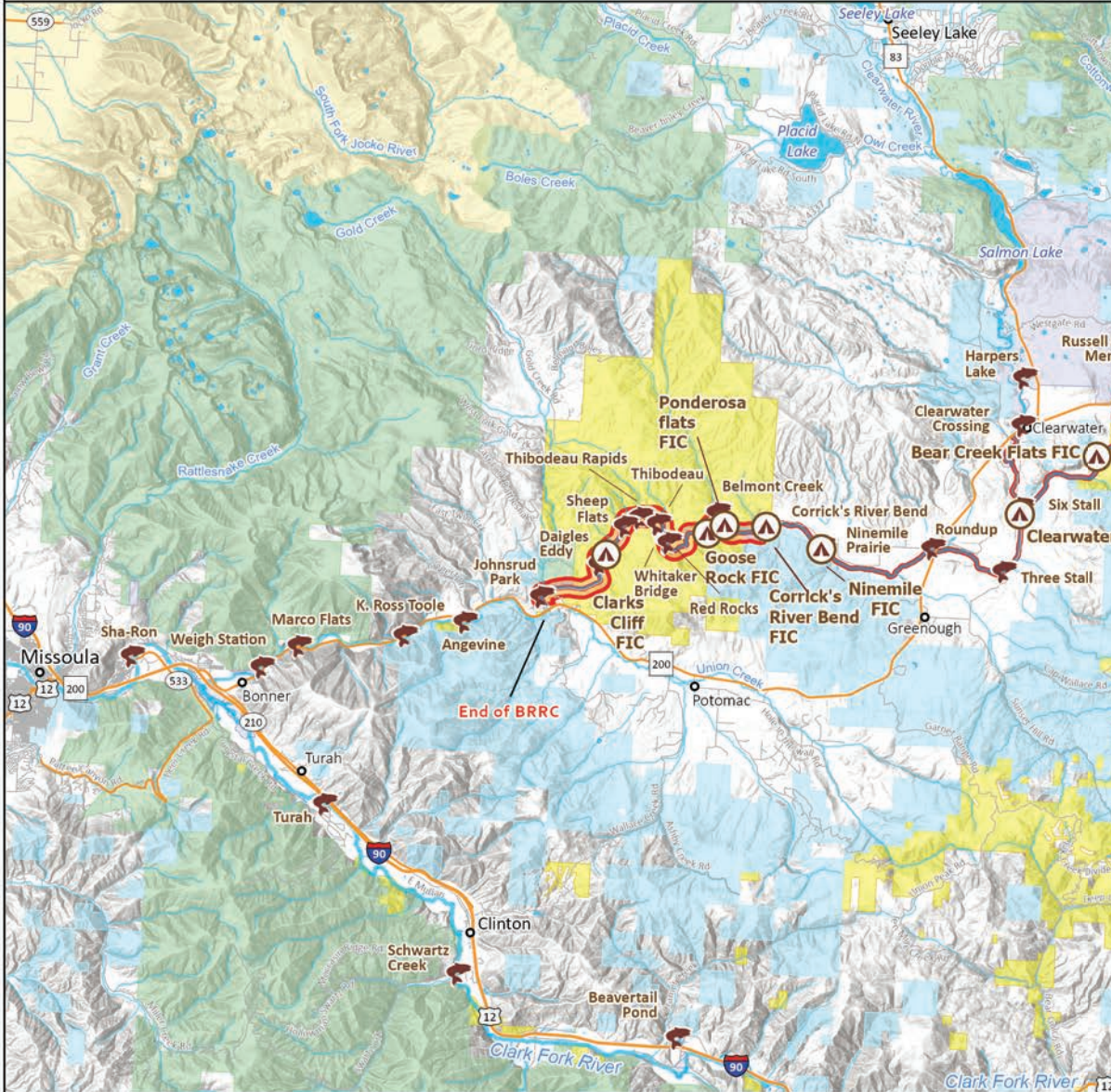
The Blackfoot River, sometimes referred to as the Big Blackfoot River, is a snow-fed and spring-fed river that begins near the town of Lincoln, Montana and flows nearly 130 miles to where it flows into the Clark Fork River just outside of Missoula. The Blackfoot River is one of Montana's most popular rivers. The Blackfoot River offers a diversity of recreational experiences, including whitewater rafting, kayaking, tubing, fishing, canoeing, and camping. The Blackfoot River flows through a variety of landscapes including open farmlands, tall cliffs, and thick forested slopes. Wildlife is plentiful on the Blackfoot River, where it is not uncommon to see elk, grizzly bears, river otters, bald eagles, and other wildlife. The popularity of the Blackfoot River has led to the development of the special recreation area known as the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor, with its own unique access opportunities and regulations.

The Blackfoot River has a handful of class II-III rapids where at lower flows (below 1,000cfs) may be characterized as boulder fields with more technical rowing through exposed rock. Please refer to the maps starting on page 12 for general location of rapids. High flows are typically mid-May with lower flows beginning towards the end of July.



Blackfoot River Access and Float-in Camping Opportunities

Overview of Blackfoot River Watershed

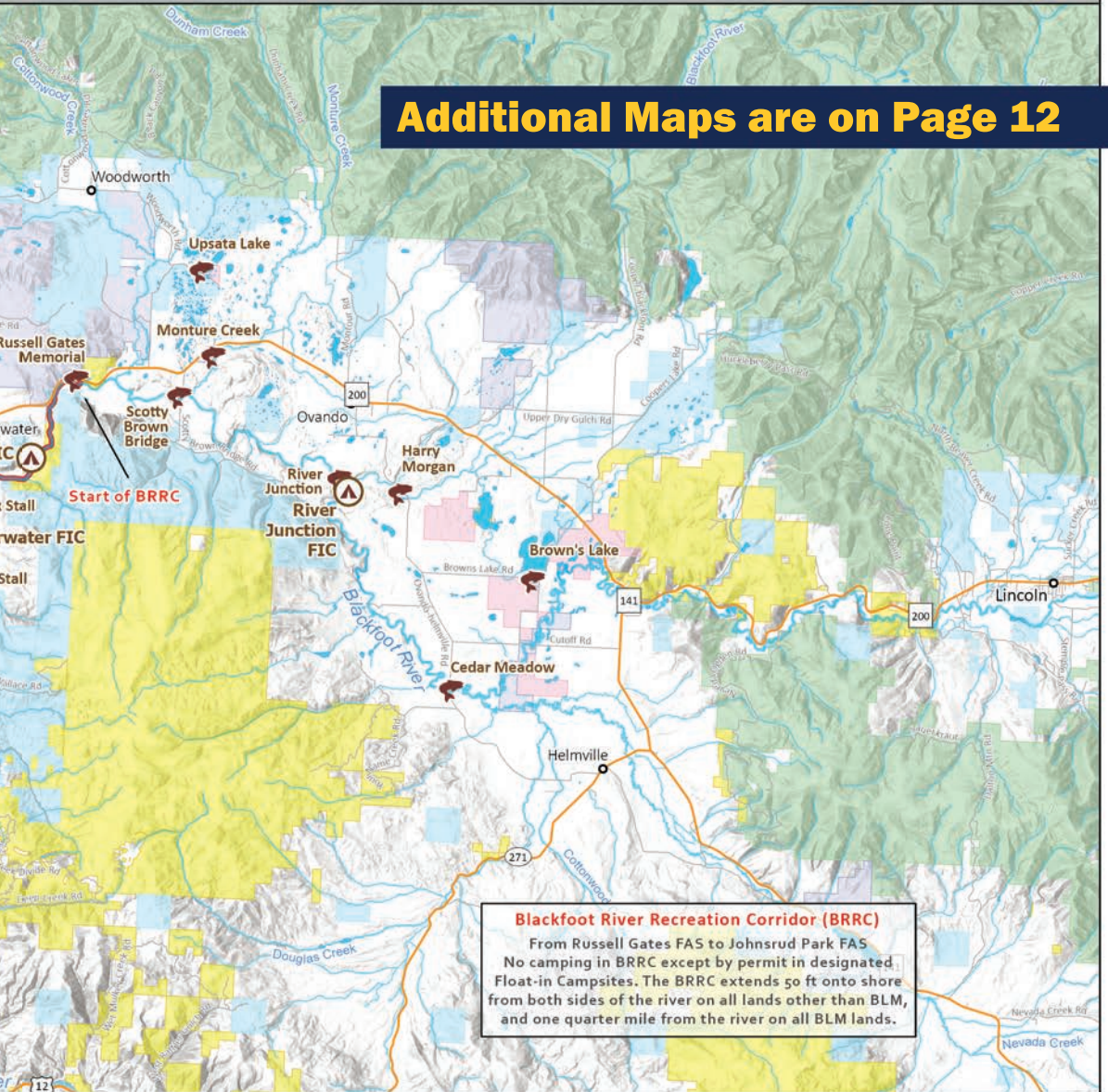


Legend

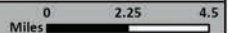
-  Float-In Campsites (FIC)
-  Fishing Access Site
-  Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor
-  Indian Reservation
-  Public Lands
-  Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
-  Other Federal Land
-  Forest Service
-  Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
-  Montana State Trust Land



Additional Maps are on Page 12



Area of Interest



Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor

Russell Gates to Johnsrud



For roughly 30 miles, the Blackfoot River flows through a special recreation zone known as the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor. It begins at Russell Gates Fishing Access Site and ends at Johnsrud Fishing Access Site. This Corridor is a cooperative agreement between government entities and private landowners along the river, which has allowed for excellent access to the river while reducing the impact from its heavy use. The agreement has provided 3 private land access points for public use and has established public walking access up to 50 feet above the river's ordinary high-water mark on private lands within the Corridor, except where posted. The Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor has unique regulations that aim to reduce the impact on the river from its popularity. Camping and fires are prohibited within the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor, except in designated Float-In campsites with a river camping permit issued by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to use the campsite. Camping outside of a designated campsite or without a permit will result in a citation to the occupants of that site. The 30-mile Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor and its regulations applies to both private and public lands within the Corridor.

Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor

Rules/Regulations



No river camping
except in designated
campsites with permit



No campfires except
in designated
campsites



No Glass
Containers/Bottles

FLOAT-IN RIVER CAMPING

Within the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor

Camping is prohibited on public and private lands, even within the ordinary high water mark, except at **designated FWP float-in campsites** with a permit obtained through Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

(Authority: 87-6-201, 87-1-303MCA, ARM 12.11.616)

Outside of the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor

Camping upstream or downstream of the designated Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor section is permitted, as long as campers are abiding by Montana's Stream Access Laws.

Designated Float-In Campsites

There are 8 designated float-in campsites along the Blackfoot River. Each float-in camp requires a permit year-round to use the site.

Fire Pan required for all fires, and ash packed out.

Portable Toilet required and human waste packed out.

To make a reservation and obtain a permit:

Call:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Region 2

(406) 542-5500

8am-5pm MST M-F

Float-In Campsites

Permit Required (406) 542-5500

River Junction Float-In Camp

River Mile: 53 (53 Miles to the Confluence with the Clark Fork) River Left

Recommended Launch Site: Cedar Meadow Fishing Access Site (Cannot access by launching at Harry Morgan)

Description: Camping on a dirt flat shaded by tall ponderosa and larch trees behind. Stay river left and pull into shoreline before the river splits at the island just upstream from the confluence with the North Fork. Refer to map. Site may be difficult to float into at low flows.



Bear Creek Flats Float-In Camp

River Mile: 37 (37 Miles to the Confluence with the Clark Fork River) River Left

Recommended Launch Site: Harry Morgan Fishing Access Site or River Junction Fishing Access Site

Description: Camping on a gravel bar or in the trees on a big bend in the river with a large eddy. Boat landing is easy.



Clearwater Float-In Camp

River Mile: 33.5 (33.5 Miles to the Confluence with the Clark Fork River) River Left 200 yards downstream of Clearwater Bridge

Recommended Launch Site: Harry Morgan or River Junction Fishing Access Site. At Lower flows, Scotty Brown Bridge or Russell Gates Fishing Access Site.

Description: Camping on a sand bar. Some trees for shade. Stay river left after going under clearwater bridge and camp is located behind willows on a sand bar.



Ninemile Prairie Float-In Camp

River Mile: 25 (25 Miles to the confluence of the Clark Fork River) River Right

Recommended Launch Site: Russell Gates Fishing Access Site. At lower flows, Six Stall Fishing Access Site.

Description: Camping on a sand bar. Boat landing is in an eddy behind a large rock outcropping. This site is smaller than the rest and will comfortably hold 2-3 tents, and may find room for 1 or 2 more.



*The section of river between Roundup and Ninemile Prairie includes rock gardens and shallow gravel bars that can be difficult to float at low flows below 800 cfs for drift boats and heavy rafts.

Corrick's River Bend Float-In Camp

River Mile: 23 (23 Miles to the confluence of the Clark Fork River) River Right

Recommended Launch Site: Russell Gates Fishing Access Site. At lower flows, Six Stall, Three Stall, or Roundup Fishing Access Site.

Description: Large gravel bar. Camp is located next to Corrick's River Bend drive in campground. Boat landing may be difficult at lower flows as the right channel becomes shallow and boaters may have to walk boats down 10-20 yards in the right channel.



Ponderosa Flats Float-In Camp

River Mile: 21.5 (21.5 Miles to the confluence of the Clark Fork River) River Right

Recommended Launch Site: Six Stall Fishing Access Site, Three Stall Fishing Access Site, or Roundup Fishing Access Site.

Description: Camp is on a large grass bench surrounded by large ponderosa pine trees.



Goose Rock Float-In Camp

River Mile: 20.5 (20.5 Miles to the confluence of the Clark Fork River) River Left

Recommended Launch Site: 6 Stall Fishing Access Site, 3 Stall Fishing Access Site, or Roundup Fishing Access Site.

Description: Camp is on a large sand bar behind willows. Boat landing is very easy in a large eddy upstream of a prominent rock in the river known as Goose Rock. You may want sand stakes for your rafts at this site.



Clark's Cliff Float-In Camp

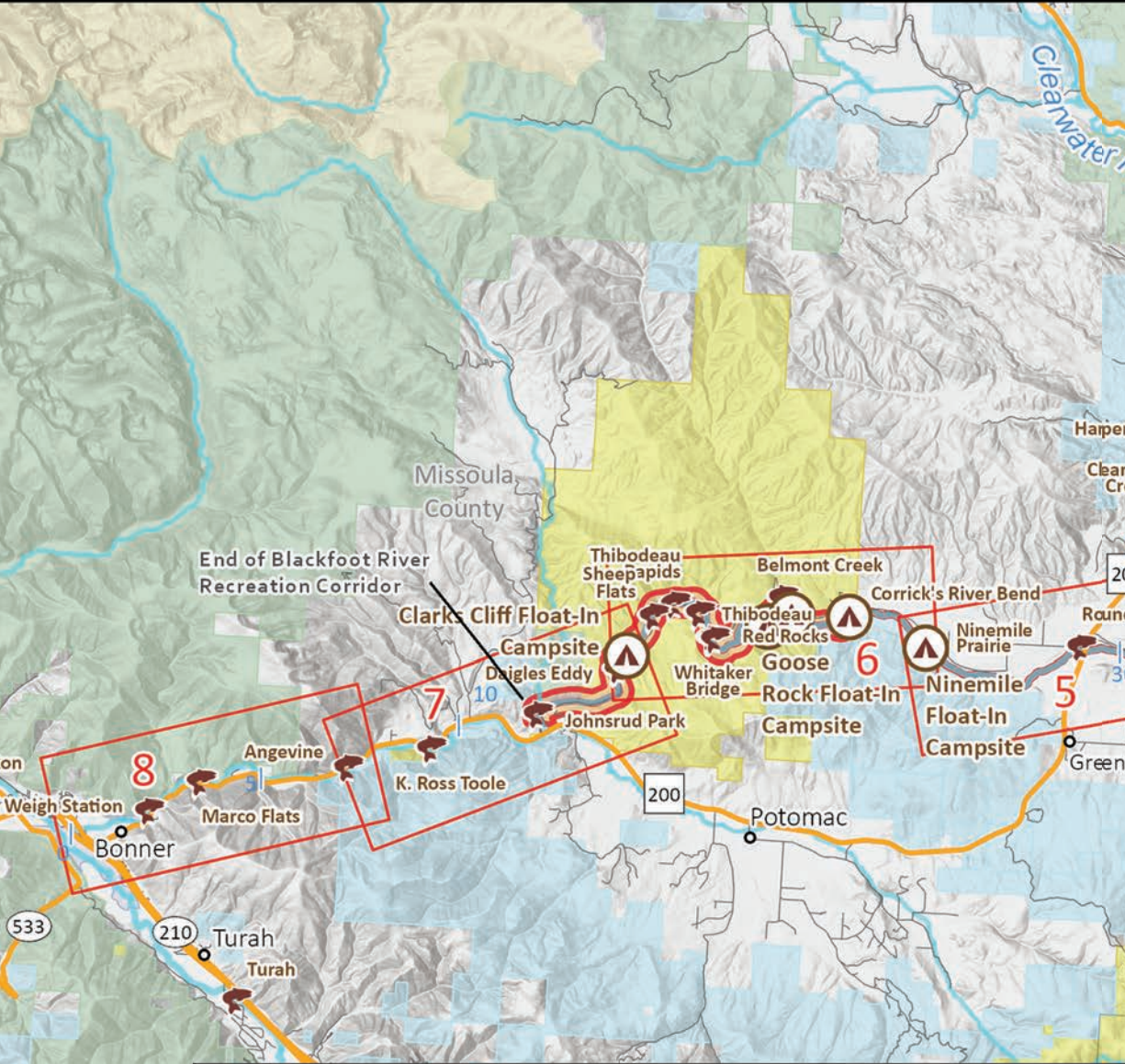
River Mile: 15.5 (15.5 Miles to the confluence of the Clark Fork River) River Right

Recommended Launch Site: Roundup Fishing Access Site. At lower flows, Corrick's River Bend Fishing Access Site.

Description: Camp is on a large gravel and grassy bench directly across river from a prominent ledge and large eddy in the river.



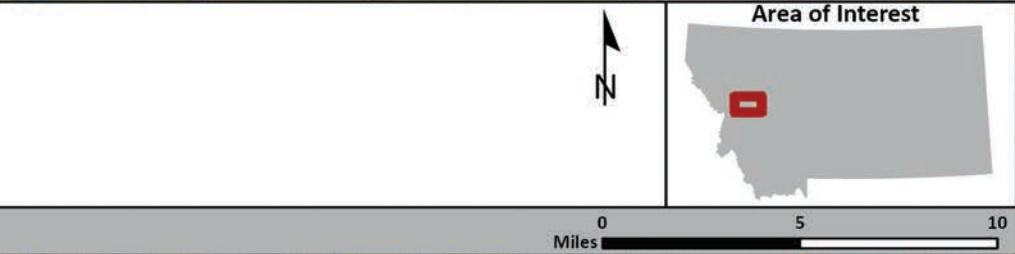
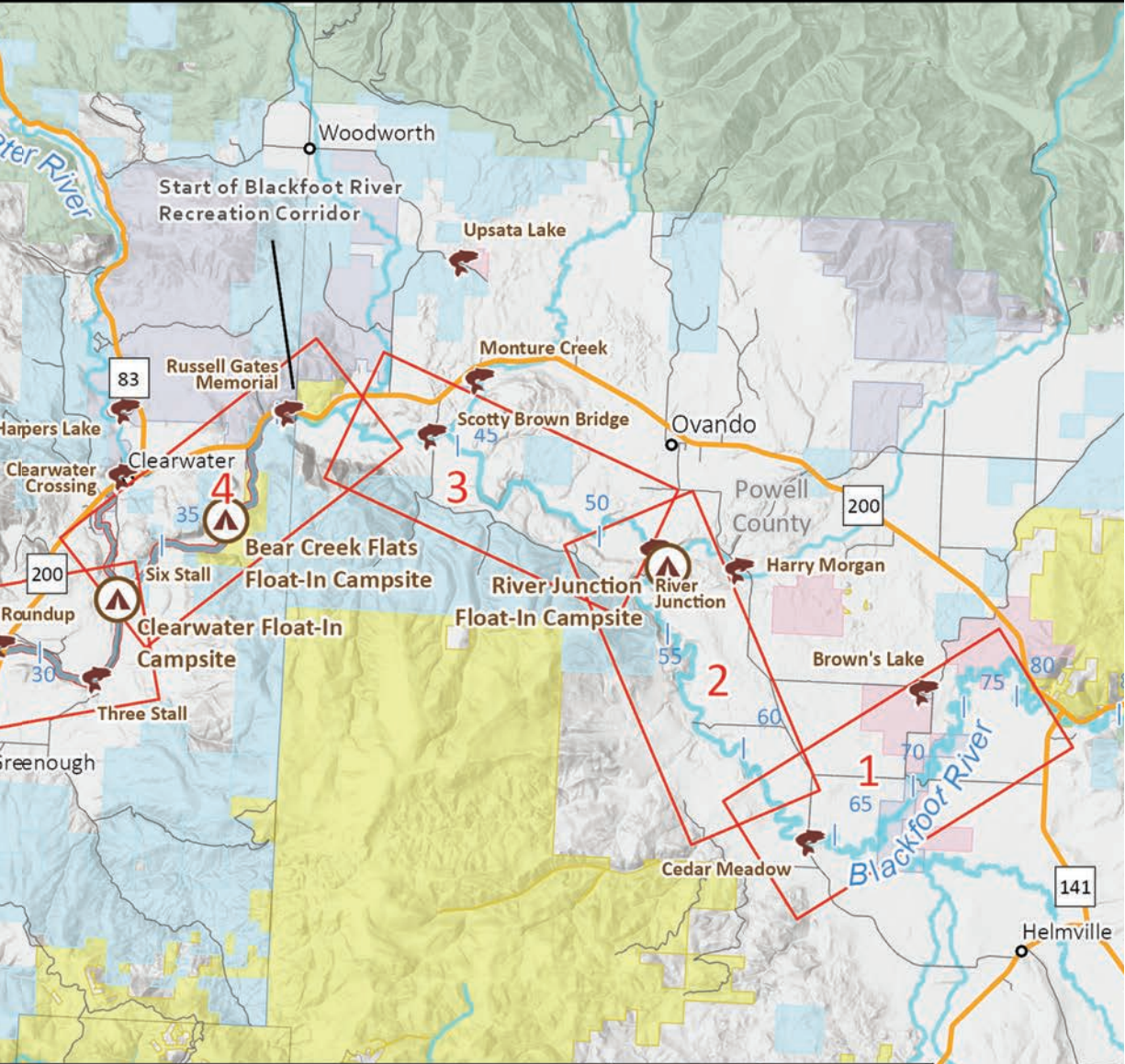
Blackfoot River Access and Camping Opportunities

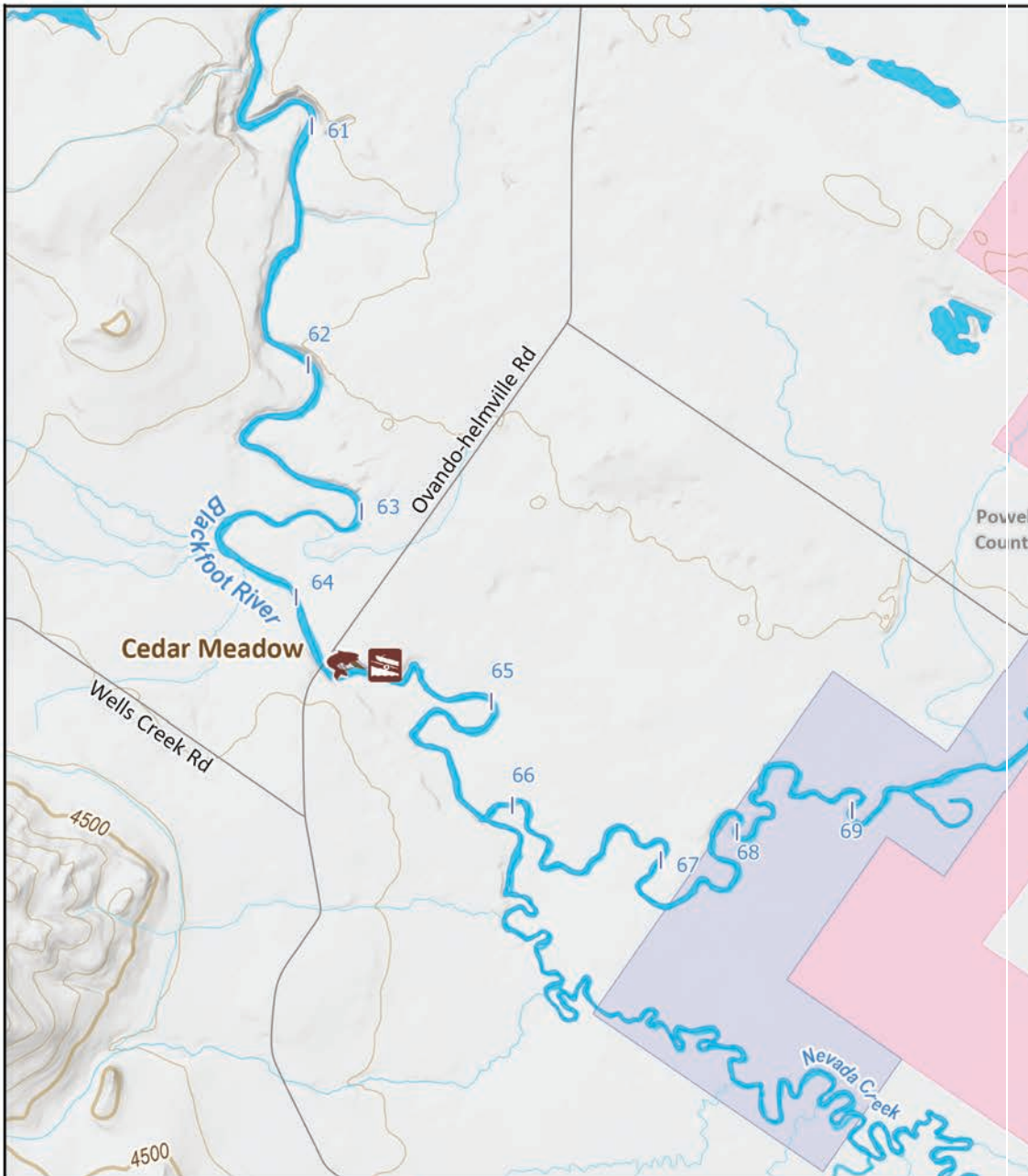


	Float-In Campsites		Map Page		Public Lands
	Fishing Access Site		Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor		Other Federal Land
	River Miles		Indian Reservation		US Forest Service
					Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
					Montana State Trust Land

Map Produced by: FAS Program/River Recreation Date produced: 1/21 File: ISR-0051559
 Administrative boundaries and FWP Lands data from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Helena, MT. Background layers from ESRI

MONTANA FWP





Fishing Access Site (FAS)



Boat Ramp

River Miles

Public Lands



FAS Boundary



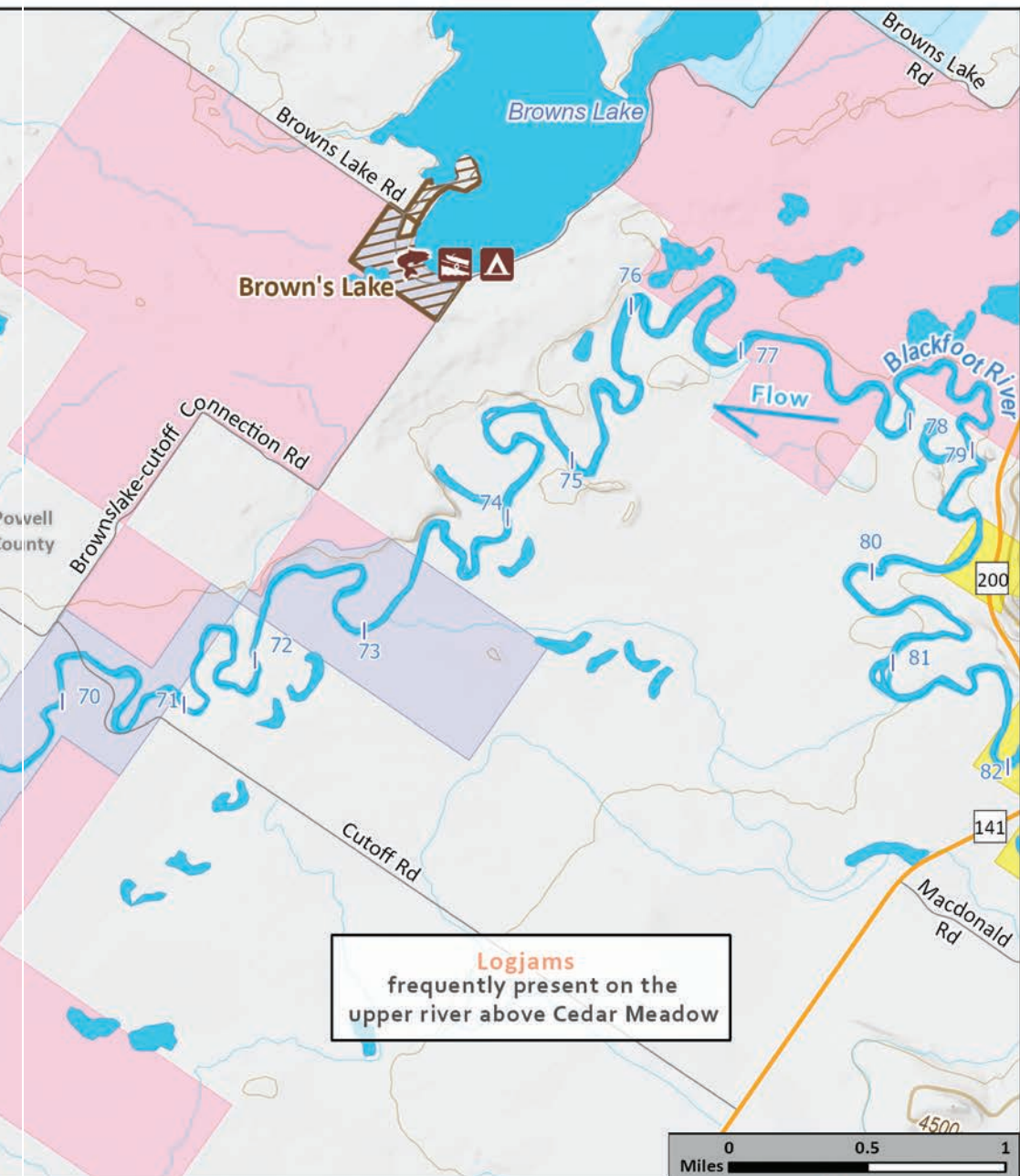
Camping Available

US

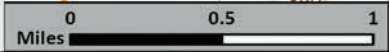
Other

Missouri

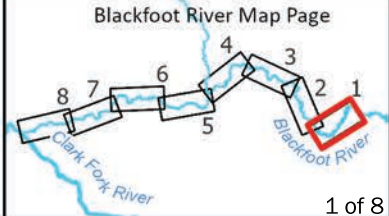
Missouri

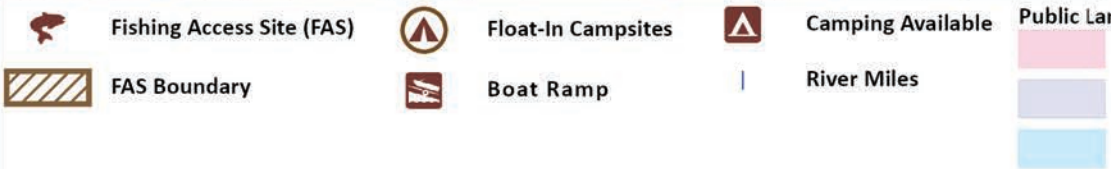
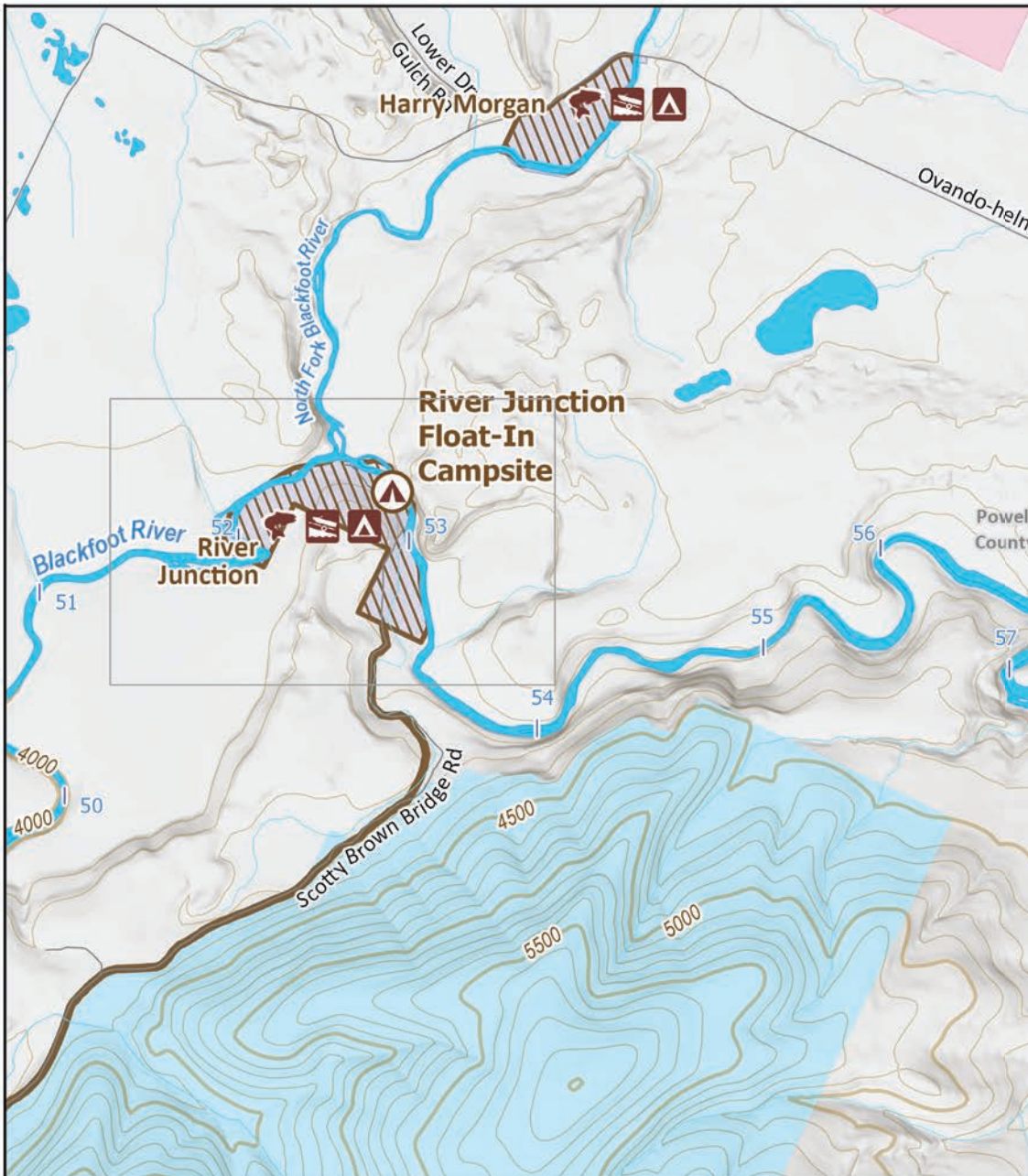


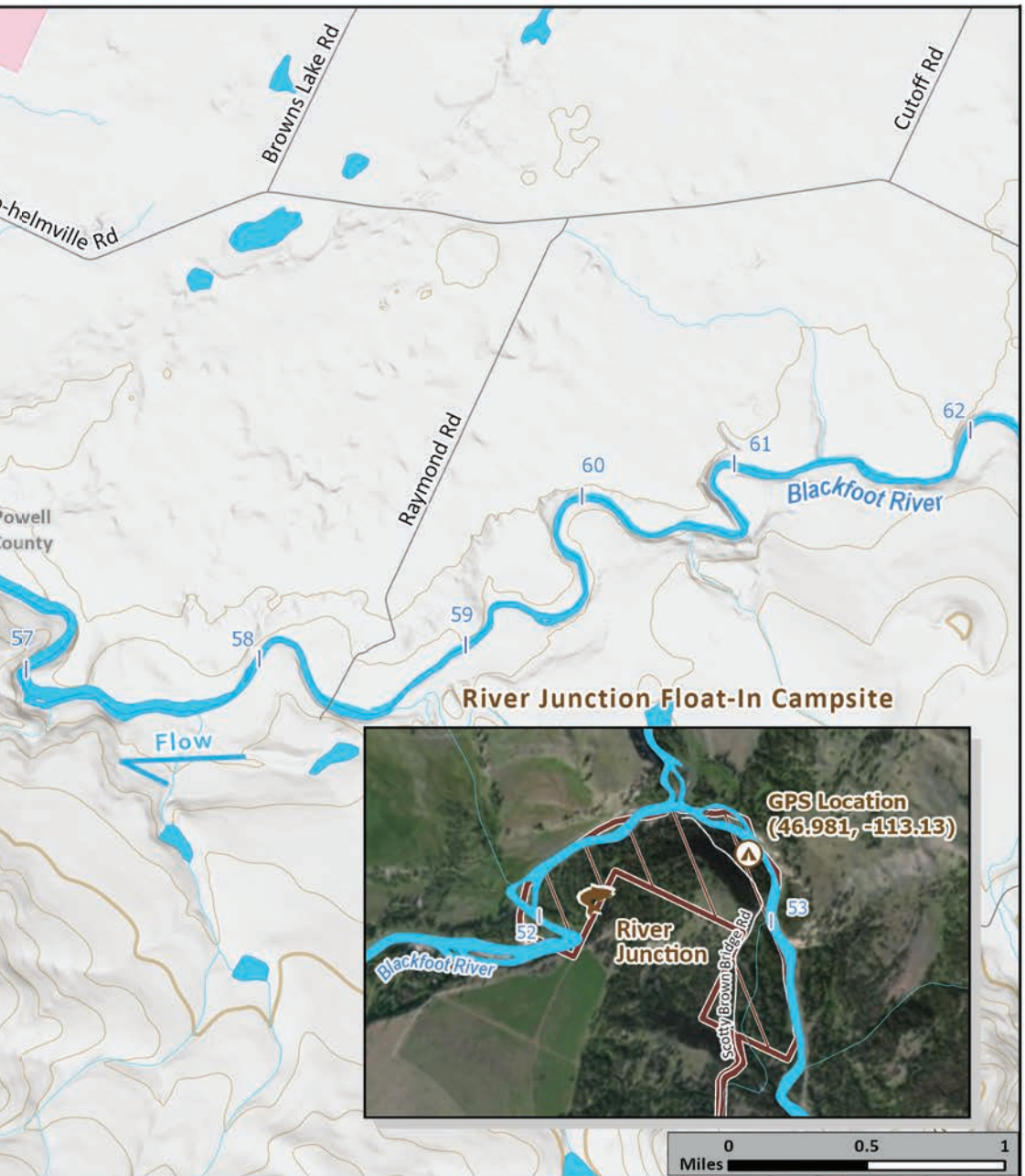
Logjams
 frequently present on the
 upper river above Cedar Meadow



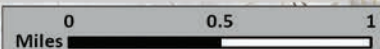
- lands
- US Bureau of Land Management
- Other Federal Land
- Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Montana State Trust Land

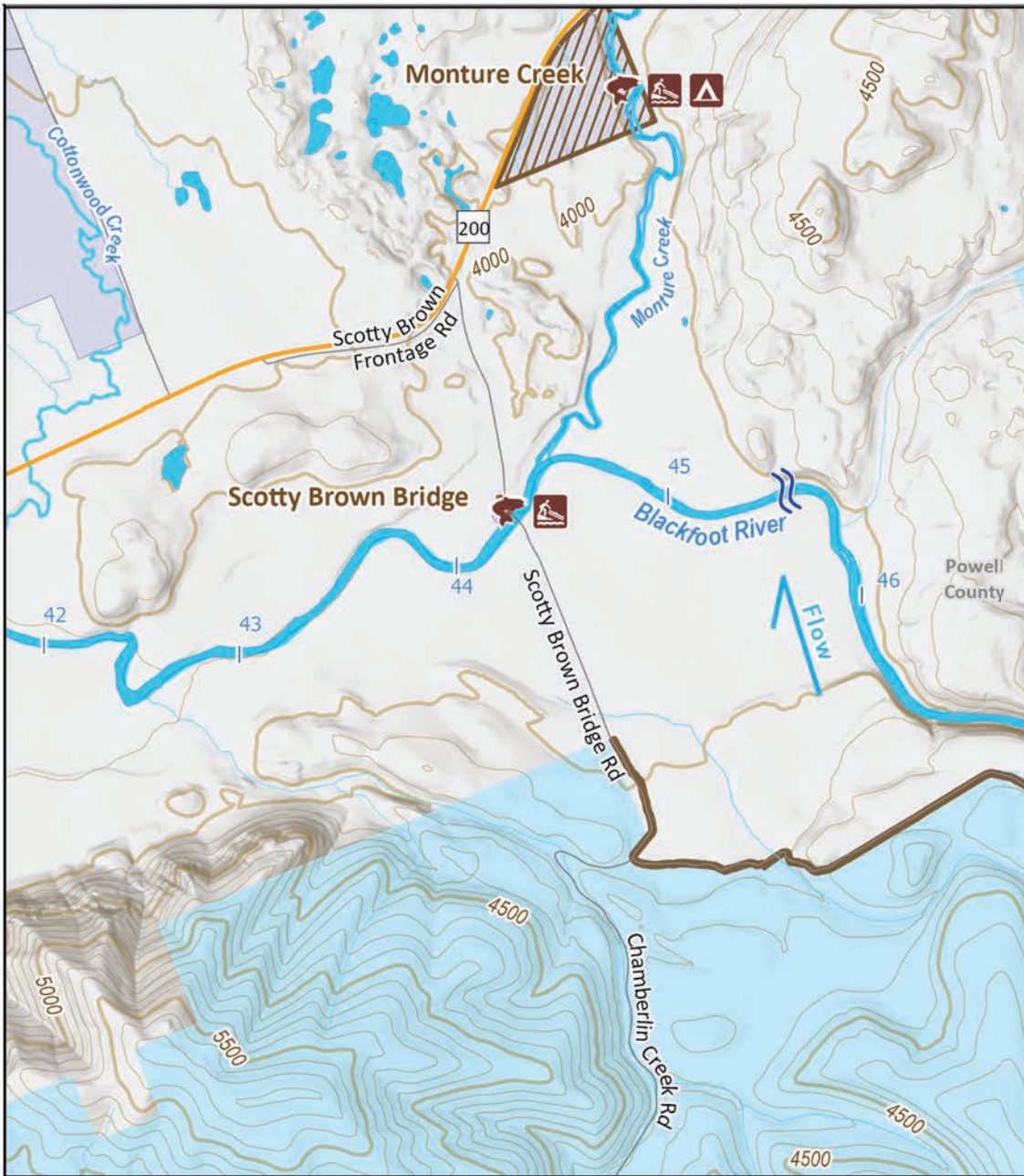




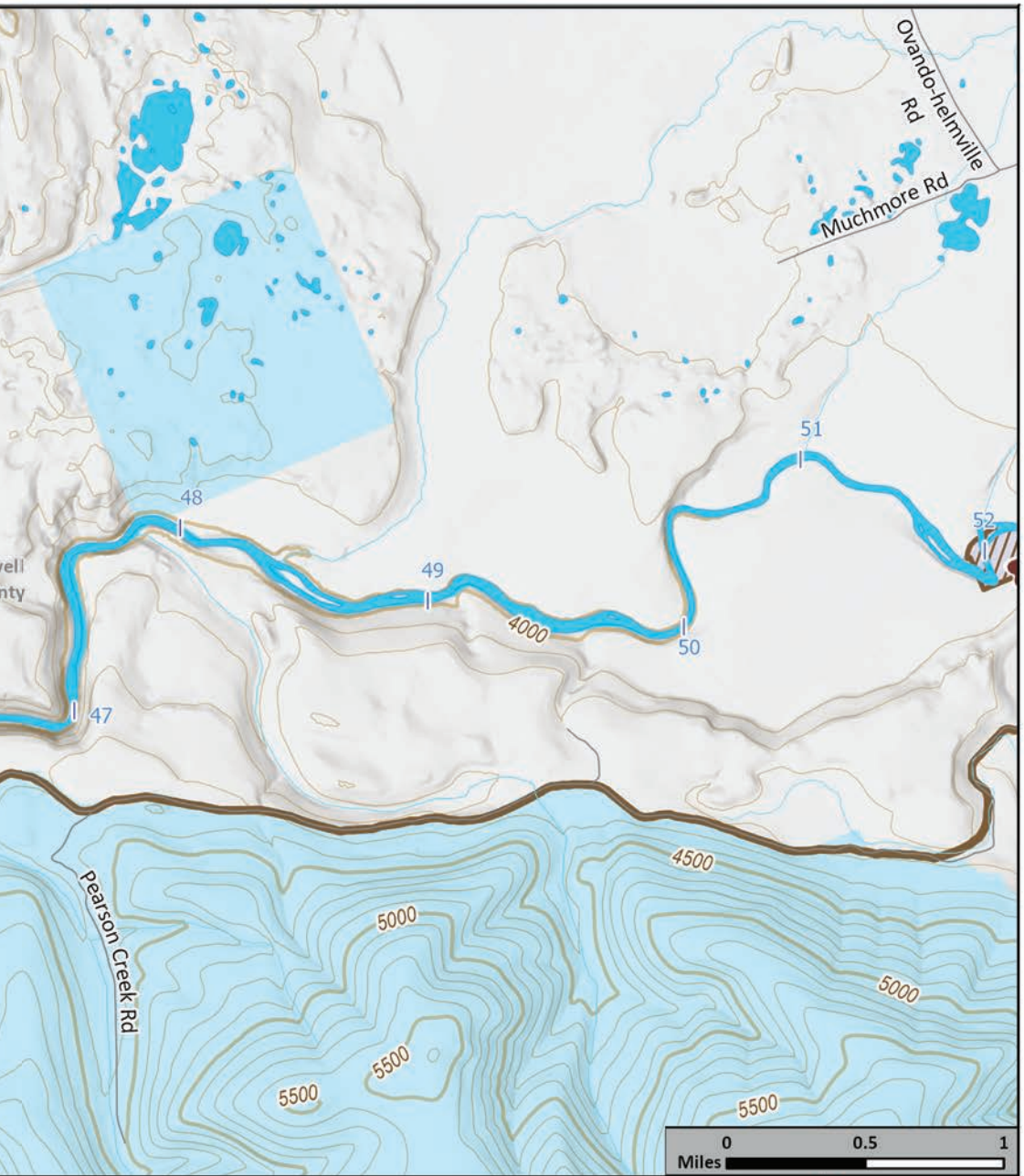


- Public Lands**
- Other Federal Land
 - Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 - Montana State Trust Land

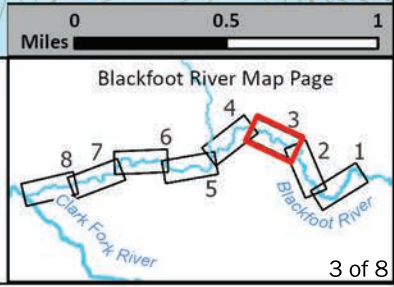


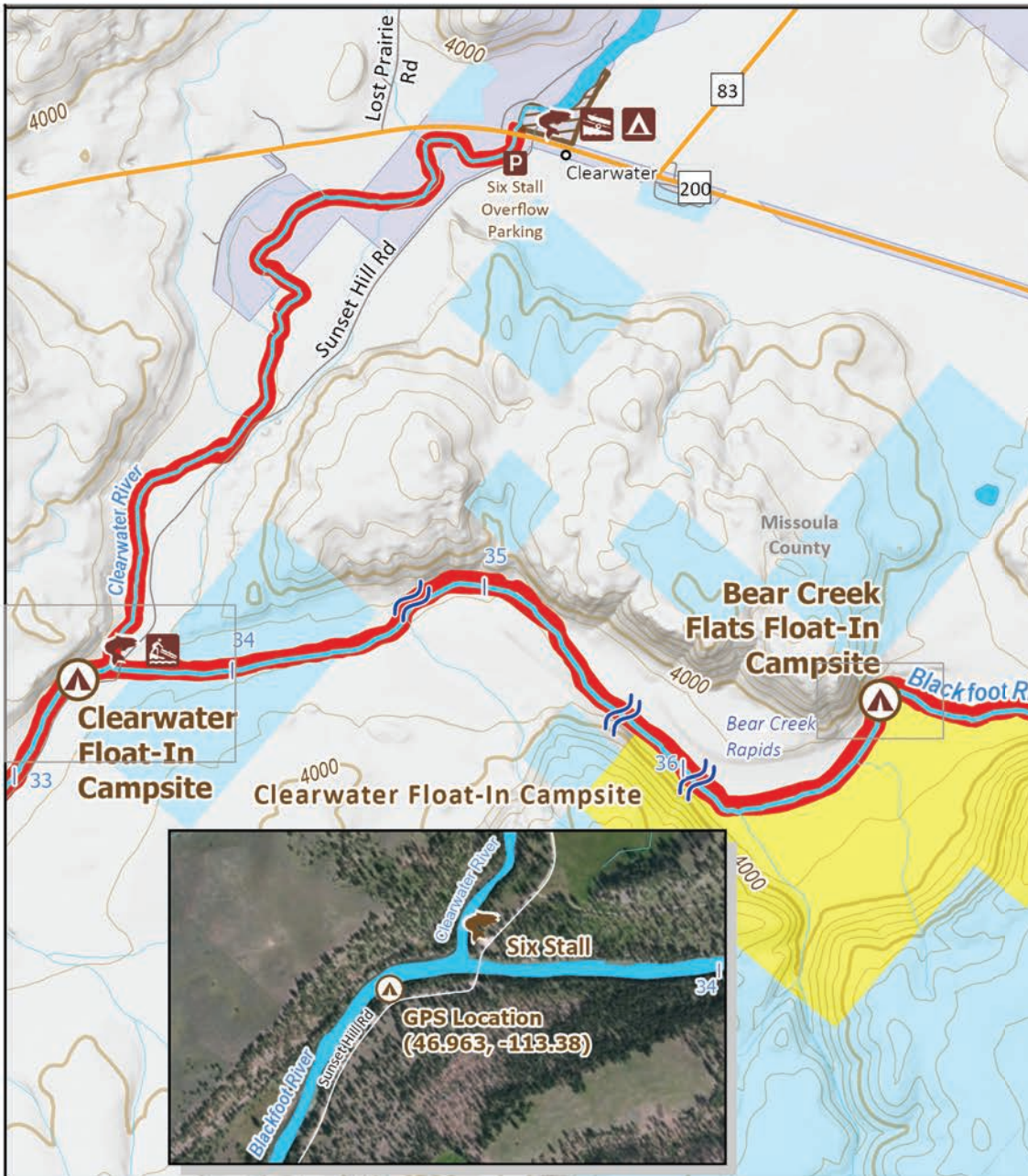


	Fishing Access Site (FAS)		Hand Launch		River Miles		Public Lands
	FAS Boundary		Camping Available		Class II Rapid		M
							M



- lands**
- US Bureau of Land Management
 - Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 - Montana State Trust Land

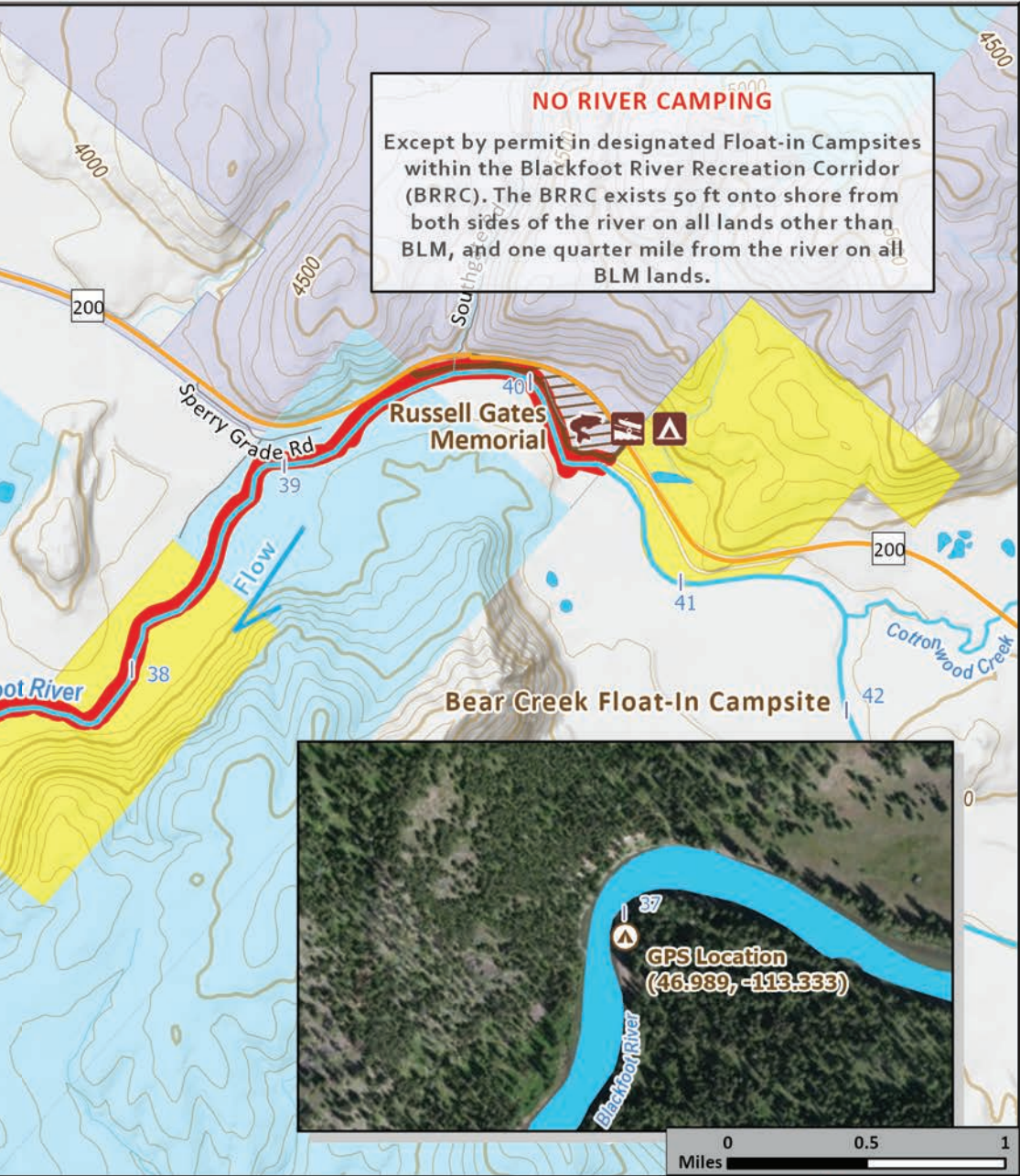




- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|-------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Fishing Access Site (FAS) |  | Boat Ramp | | River Miles |
|  | FAS Boundary |  | Hand Launch |  | Class II Rapid |
|  | Float-In Campsites |  | Camping Available |  | Blackfoot River Recreation |
| | |  | Overflow Parking | | |

NO RIVER CAMPING

Except by permit in designated Float-in Campsites within the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor (BRR). The BRR exists 50 ft onto shore from both sides of the river on all lands other than BLM, and one quarter mile from the river on all BLM lands.



- Public Lands**
-  US Bureau of Land Management
 -  Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 -  Montana State Trust Land



Recreation Corridor (BRR)

NO RIVER CAMPING

Except by permit in designated Float-in within the Blackfoot River Recreation (BRR). The BRR exists 50 ft onto shore both sides of the river on all lands of BLM, and one quarter mile from the river on BLM lands.



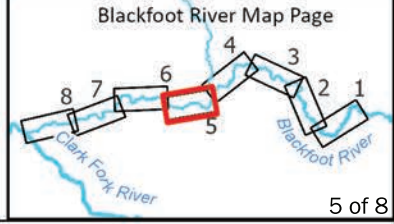
- | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------------|---|
|  | Fishing Access Site (FAS) |  | Hand Launch | | River Miles |  |
|  | FAS Boundary |  | Camping Available |  | Class II Rapid |  |
|  | Float-In Campsites |  | Overflow Parking |  | Class III Rapid |  |

G
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 **Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor (BRR)**

- Public Lands**
-  Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 -  Montana State Trust Land



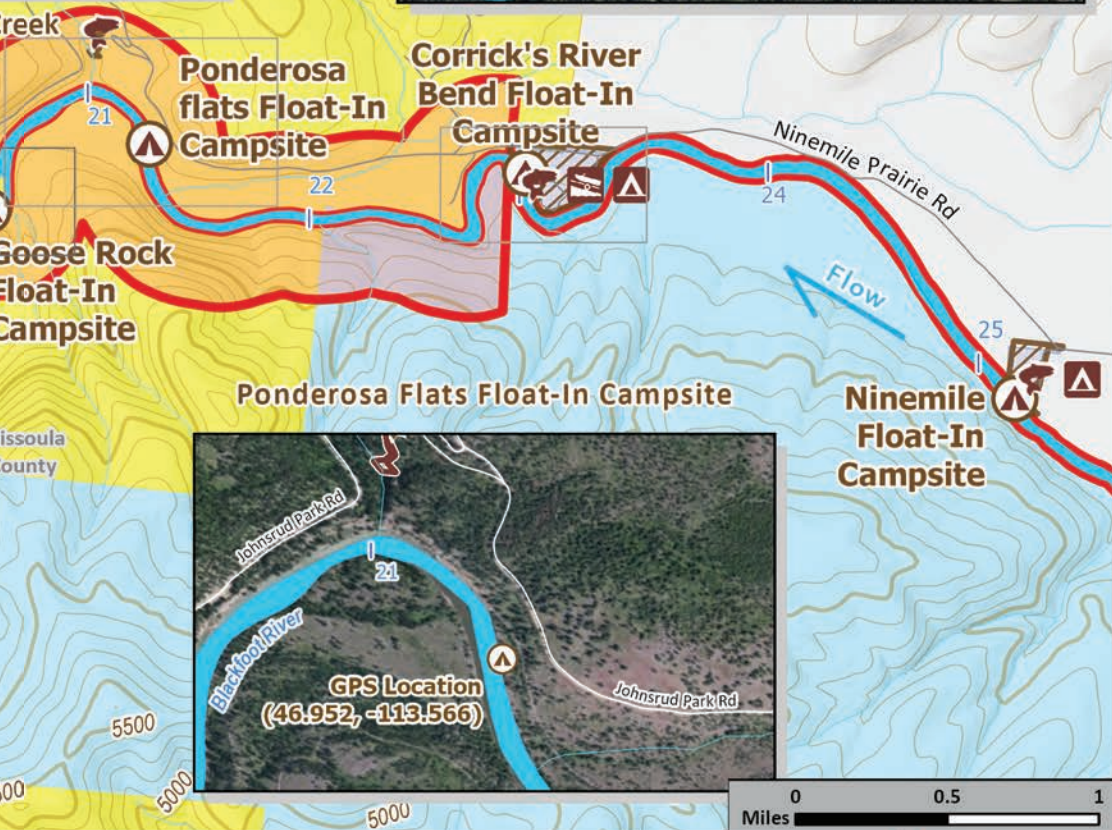
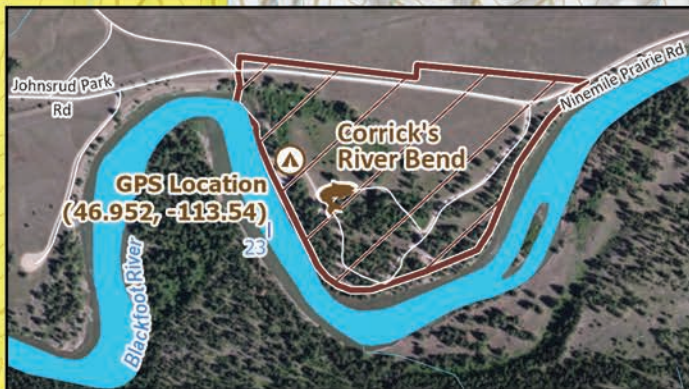
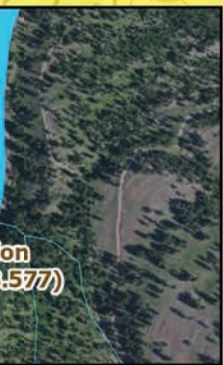


NO RIVER CAMPING
 Except by permit in designated Float-in Campsites within the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor (BRR). The BRR exists 50 ft onto shore from both sides of the river on all lands other than BLM, and one quarter mile from the river on all BLM lands.

	Fishing Access Site (FAS)		Boat Ramp		Class II Rapid
	FAS Boundary		Camping Available		Class III Rapid
	Float-In Campsites		River Miles		Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor

Campsite

Corrick's River Bend Float-In Campsite



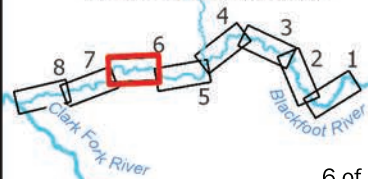
Public Lands

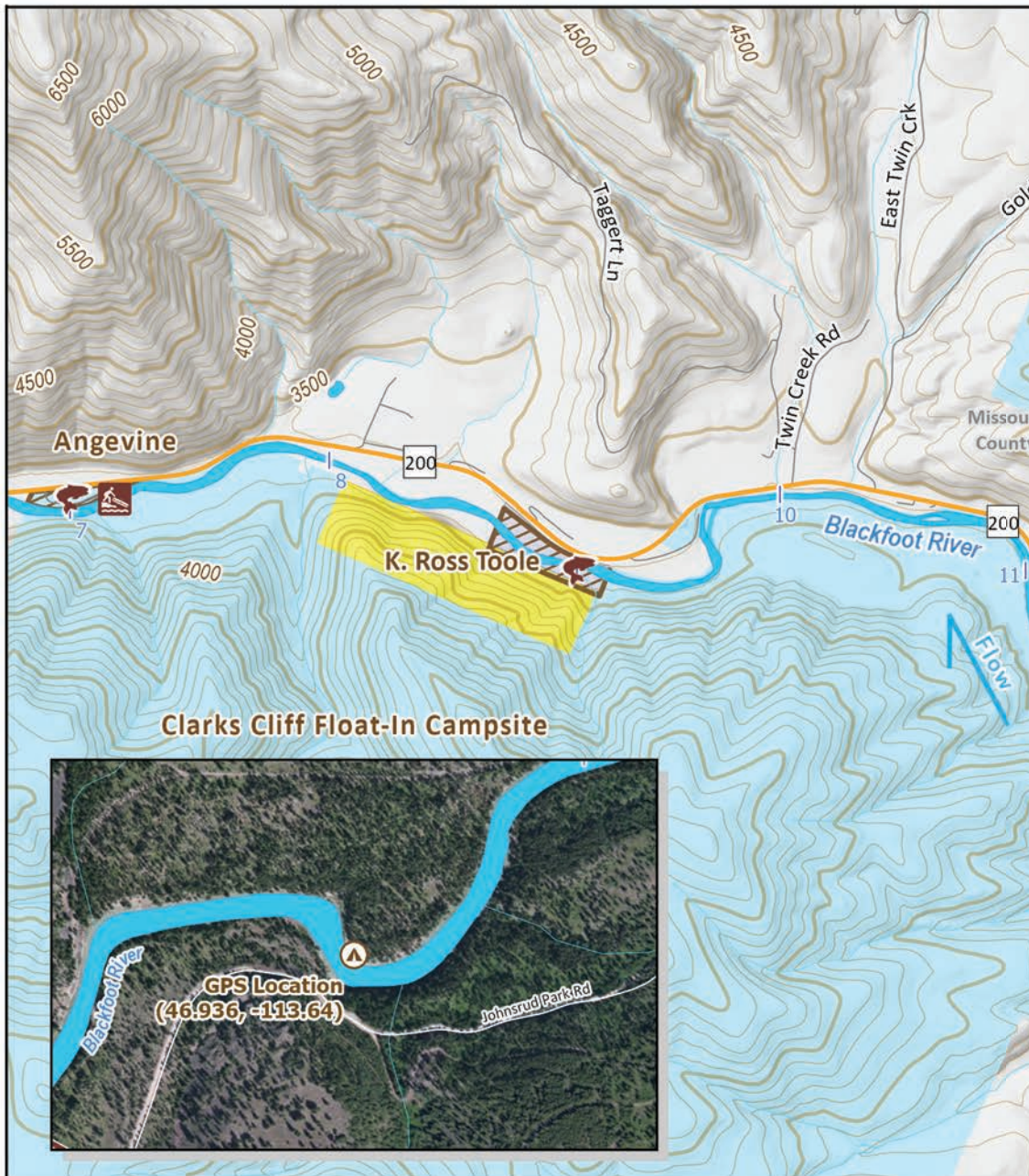
-  US Bureau of Land Management
-  Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
-  Montana State Trust Land

ation Corridor (BRRC)

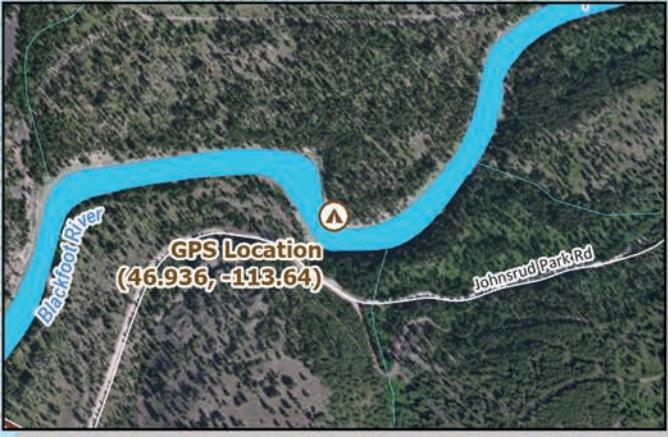


Blackfoot River Map Page





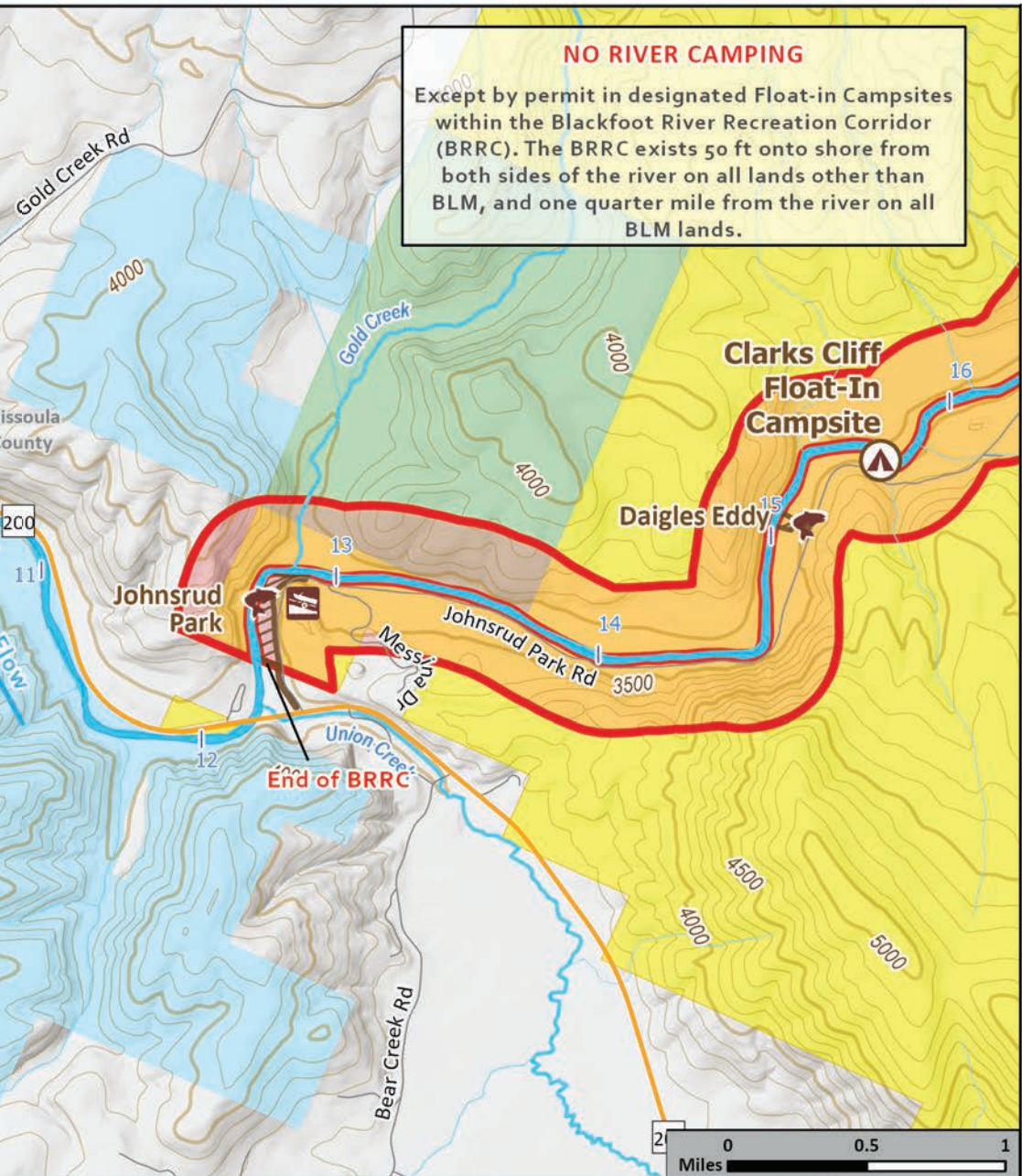
Clarks Cliff Float-In Campsite



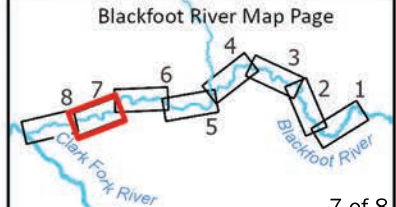
- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|---|---|-------------|
|  | Fishing Access Site (FAS) |  | Boat Ramp |  | Public Land |
|  | FAS Boundary |  | Hand Launch |  | U |
|  | Float-In Campsites | | River Miles |  | M |
| | |  | Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor (BRR) |  | M |

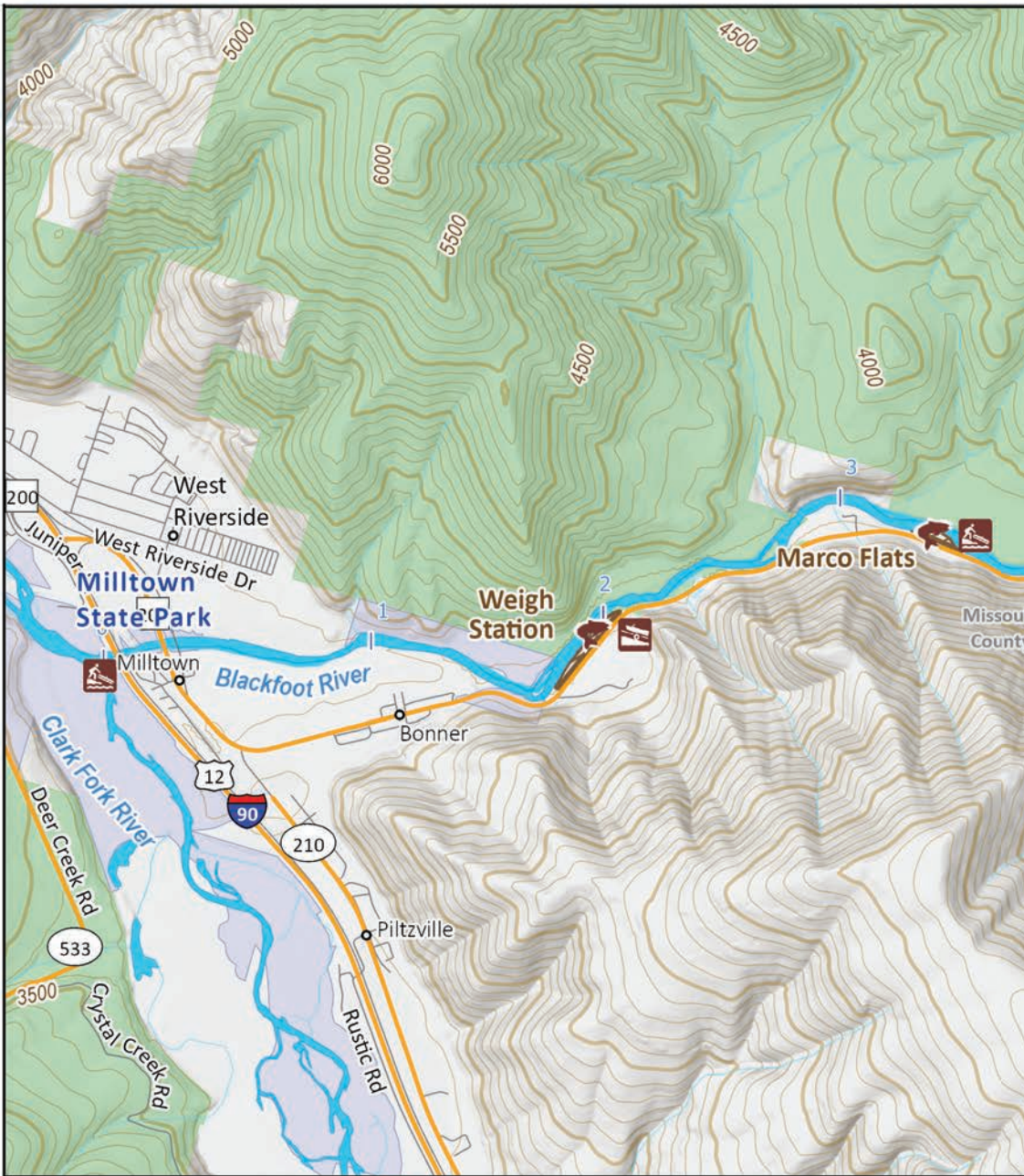
NO RIVER CAMPING

Except by permit in designated Float-in Campsites within the Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor (BRRC). The BRRC exists 50 ft onto shore from both sides of the river on all lands other than BLM, and one quarter mile from the river on all BLM lands.



- Lands**
- US Bureau of Land Management
 - US Forest Service
 - Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 - Montana State Trust Land





Fishing Access Site (FAS)



Boat Ramp



River Miles

Public Lands



FAS Boundary

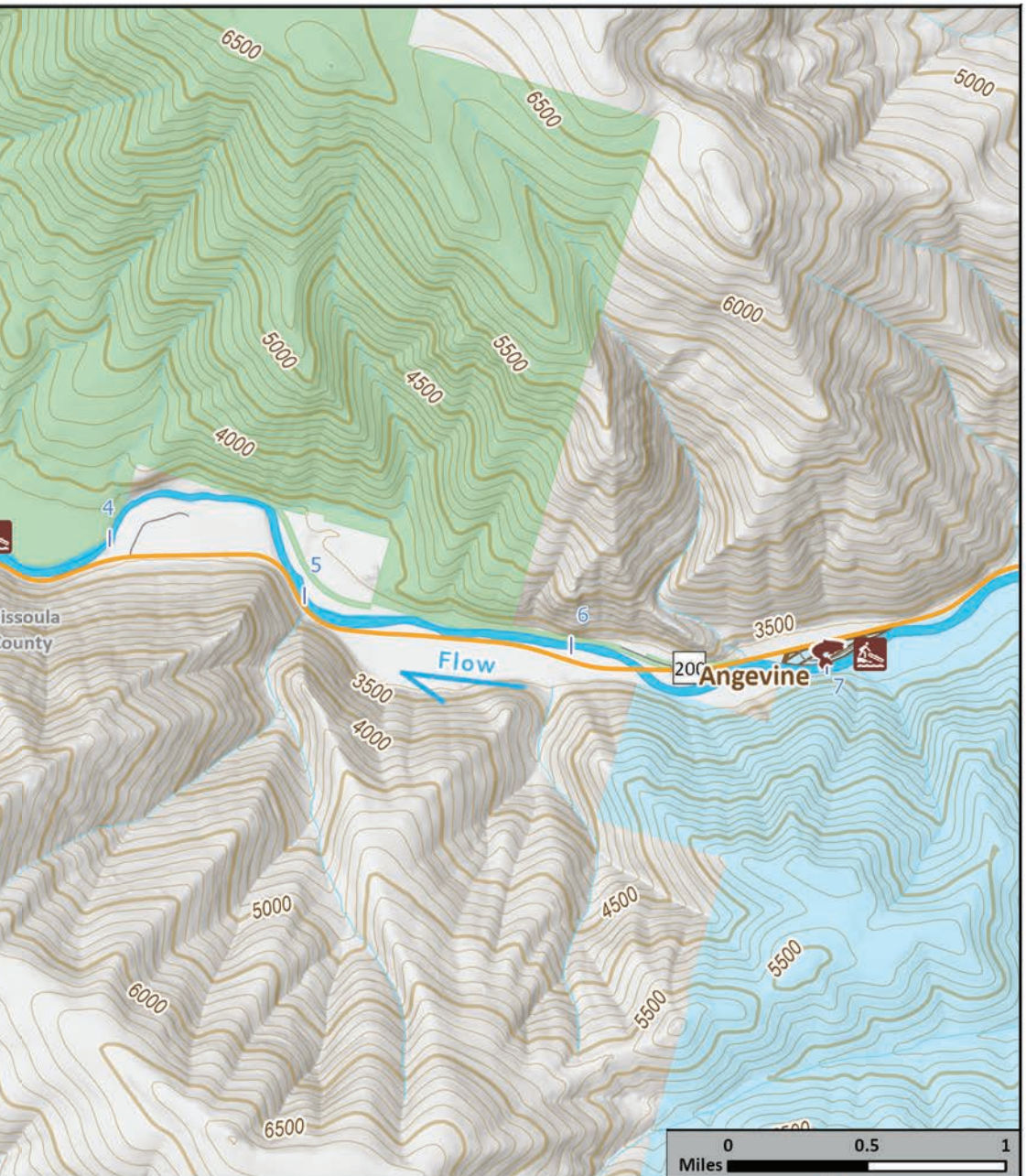


Hand Launch

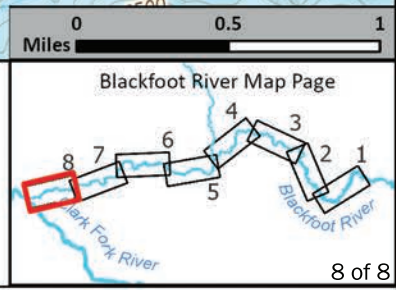
US Forest S

Montana F

Montana S



Forest Service
 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 Montana State Trust Land



Leave No Trace

Outdoor Ethics for River Corridors

- 1. PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**
 - Learn about river specific regulations and permits needed
 - Prepare for emergencies
 - Schedule trip for appropriate water flows for your group's ability
- 2. TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES**
 - Avoid camping on vegetation
- 3. DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY**
 - Pack it in, Pack it out.
 - Portable toilet system is required to pack out all human waste
 - Pick up after your pet and pack out all waste
- 4. LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND**
 - Do not build structures or dig trenches in campsites
- 5. MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS**
 - Firepan is required for all fires.
 - Use dead and downed wood. Do not cut wood or burn large logs.
 - Pack out ash and unburned wood.
- 6. RESPECT WILDLIFE**
 - Food Storage is required.
 - Observe wildlife from a distance.
- 7. BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS**
 - Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

**FIREPAN
REQUIRED**



ROCKART®

90-741

**PORT-A-POTTY
REQUIRED**



ROCKART®

90-740

THIS IS BEAR COUNTRY!

**WHEN NOT IN IMMEDIATE
USE, FOOD & ATTRACTANTS
MUST BE STORED IN A:**



- **Closed, hard-sided vehicle or camper**
- **On-site, fixed, designated food storage locker or**
- **Bear resistant container approved by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC).**

Violation of these rules could result in a citation (23-1-106 MCA & FWP Commission Rule).



Food Storage boxes are provided at each float-in campsite. Please leave boxes empty after use, and clean any mess left behind. Pack out all garbage. Please report any bear encounters within a float-in campsite to FWP.

Grizzly Bears and Black Bears are present along the Blackfoot River. It is recommended that you carry bear spray and be bear aware.

The Blackfoot River access sites can be very busy during the summer. Traffic becomes congested. Please be patient and come prepared to quickly use the boat ramp.

Share the Ramp



Stay Clear. Don't block boaters ready to get into or out of the water.

Prepare. Unload gear and prep boats in the parking lot instead of the ramp.

Wait Your Turn. Talk to ramp users to determine launch and take-out order.

Move to the Side. Once in the water, move to the side to clear the ramp.

Park Politely. Don't block cars or park in designated trailer parking areas.

Thanks for keeping
it friendly & respecting
other users.



Fishing the Blackfoot River

The Blackfoot River is one of Montana's most productive fisheries. The Blackfoot River is home to a diversity of fish species and other aquatic life.

Bull Trout

The Bull Trout is listed as a threatened species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Targeting Bull Trout is illegal on the Blackfoot River.

Fishing Outfitters

There are several outfitters who operate on the Blackfoot River that can provide fishing services. Outfitters must obtain a Special Recreation Commercial Use Permit from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for the Blackfoot River. Please don't hesitate to ask for required documents before using an outfitter.

Regulations

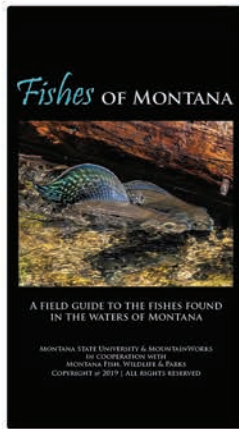
Regulations are printed at any license provider, sporting goods stores, or FWP offices. They can also be found online at FWP.MT.GOV



Use the Fishes of Montana app as a guide to Montana's fisheries.

More information to fishing in Montana:

FWP.MT.GOV/FISH



River Safety “Know before you go!”

Always wear a lifejacket (PFD).

Rivers are hazardous and frequently changing. A lifejacket can save your life.

Always check river conditions.

Rivers change frequently. Check water flows and learn about hazards such as log jams, rapids, and any other hazards in the water before using the river. When in doubt get out and scout!

Blackfoot River Streamflow data can be found at waterdata.usgs.gov

Always tell a friend.

The Blackfoot River is remote with limited cellphone coverage. Share your plan with others before your river trip.

Always prepare for extreme weather.

Weather on the Blackfoot can be extremely hot, snowing, raining, lightning, and windy. Always pack the gear you need for extreme weather.

Weather events can happen quickly and unexpectedly.

Always know the law.

Montana’s boating laws, fishing regulations, and river recreation regulations are your responsibility to follow. Please contact FWP if you have any questions about the laws regarding river use.

86%
of drowning victims NOT
wearing a lifejacket



The body loses heat
25x
faster when immersed in
cold water than it does
when dry. Always dress for
immersion.

23%
of boating deaths where
the primary cause was
known as alcohol as the
leading factor

[-safeboatingcampaign.com](http://safeboatingcampaign.com)

Never float impaired.

Do not go paddling if you should not be driving. Drinks and drugs are even more dangerous on already challenging rivers such as the Blackfoot River. Impairment = Accidents

Never run a rapid unless you see a clear path through it.

The Blackfoot River has several class II and III rapids that can be very difficult to run at certain times of the year. New log jams or woody debris may also present challenges. Get out and scout if you are not sure of a clear path.

Never exceed your limits.

Whether you are tubing, canoeing, rafting, or on a stand up paddleboard (SUP), know your ability and limits. If you don't feel comfortable, return to shore. Rivers are dangerous.

Play it Safe!

For more safety tips
visit

paddling.com/learn

Have the Right Safety Equipment



Blackfoot River Contact Information

Emergency: 911

Natural Resource/River Violations: 1-800-TIP-MONT
(1-800-847-6668)

Missoula County Sheriff's Office: (406) 258-4810

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks: (406) 542-5500

Bureau of Land Management: (406) 329-3914

FWP River Recreation Manager: (406) 542-5562

FWP River Ranger: (406) 542-5564



“On the Big Blackfoot River above the mouth of Belmont Creek the banks are fringed by large Ponderosa pines. In the slanting sun of late afternoon the shadows of great branches reached from across the river, and the trees took the river in their arms. The shadows continued up the bank, until they included us”

— Norman Maclean, quote from *A River Runs Through It*



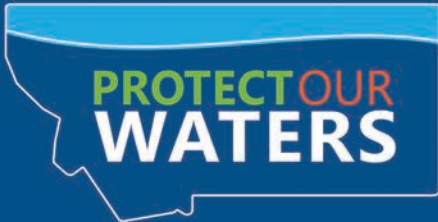
HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES



Clean: Remove all plants and mud from boat, trailer and fishing gear.

Drain: Pull your drain plug. Before you leave the area eliminate all water from your boat and gear.

Dry: Allow time for your boat and gear to dry completely before launching somewhere else.



- Stop at **ALL** open watercraft inspection stations.
- When traveling west across the Continental Divide, watercraft must be inspected before launching.
- Watercraft transported into Montana from out-of-state must be inspected before launching.
- Non-resident watercraft must purchase the Vessel AIS prevention pass.

 : Protect Our Waters Montana

 : 406.444.2440

CleanDrainDryMT.com



**MONTANA FISH,
WILDLIFE & PARKS**





THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.