MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Enforcement Division

Administrative rule proposal pertaining to amendments to current no-wake zones and adoption of new no-wake zones on Canyon Ferry Reservoir

Attachments

1.) Letter of support from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.
2.) Letter of opinion on the impacts of the proposed changes from FWP Fisheries Biologist Eric Roberts.
3.) Letter of opinion on the impacts of the proposed changes from FWP Wildlife Biologist Adam Grove.
4.) Proposed new ARM language.
5.) Maps of proposed no-wake restrictions.

The Enforcement Division of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks makes the following proposal to change the boating regulations on Canyon Ferry Reservoir:

Background

Canyon Ferry Reservoir is a large impoundment of the Missouri River in central Montana near Helena. Canyon Ferry has a variety of recreation sites located around the lake that belong to and/or are administered through Bureau of Reclamation. These sites offer opportunities for camping, day use and boating activities. Canyon Ferry is a very popular fishing destination with excellent fishing opportunities for a variety of different species. Recreational boating and water sports are very popular on Canyon Ferry as well.

Canyon Ferry Reservoir's proximity to the population centers of Helena and Bozeman make it a popular destination for recreation, and large numbers of boats use the lake each summer. Additionally, Canyon Ferry is visited by non-resident boaters. During the 2017 field season, approximately 3% of the boats inspected by AIS field crews at Canyon Ferry were from out of state.

Boating on Canyon Ferry has been steadily increasing over the years and shows no signs of slowing down. Canyon Ferry is a large body of water, and boats are able to spread out and avoid each other. However, the public boat ramps and campgrounds are choke points where boaters converge creating potential safety issues. All commercial marinas around the lake have no-wake zones in place and several public boat ramps do as well.

This proposal seeks to proactively address safety issues near busy boat ramps and maintain consistent regulations at each major public boat launch by adding no-wake zones to areas of heavy usage. Additionally, several changes are proposed to the existing ARM rules to clarify them and ensure that wake zones are under the correct ARM rule for that body of water.

Proposed amendments to current no-wake zones

ARM 12.11.3201
Remove (a) Cave Bay. Cave Bay is the location of Kim's Marina, a commercial marina. ARM 12.11.504 creates no-wake zone around all commercial marinas. Cave Bay is covered by this ARM and does not need to be listed in this rule.

Modify (b) little Hellgate to read Hellgate Bay. Hellgate Campground and boat ramp are located in what is commonly called Hellgate Bay. This change will clarify the rule language to be consistent with the BOR's place name as well as the common name for this location.

Remove (d) Carp Bay. There is no officially known location on Canyon Ferry called Carp Bay and therefore it is not needed in this rule.

Remove (e) Canyon Ferry Dam to Riverside boat ramp. This location is below Canyon Ferry dam and is not part of the reservoir. This wake zone should be listed in ARM 12.11.3205 that contains rules for Hauser Reservoir the next impoundment downstream from Canyon Ferry.

ARM 12.11.3205
Add Canyon Ferry Dam to Riverside boat ramp. This wake zone is not located on Canyon Ferry Reservoir and is appropriately located in this ARM rule.

Proposed new no wake zones

1.) Shannon Boat Launch

    Proposed Rule: No-wake speed within 300 feet of the Shannon dock or as buoyed.

    Shannon is a public boat launch site located on the north end of Canyon Ferry. Shannon is very popular and is often full to maximum capacity during the summer. Currently, no boating restrictions exist at Shannon. The proposed wake zone would require boats to slow down to less than wake speed when in proximity to the ramp. This proposal will increase safety as Shannon is a choke point where boats converge. Additionally, it will increase safety to individuals loading and unloading boats at the ramp. Finally, this wake zone will be consistent with the other wake zones at heavily used recreation sites on Canyon Ferry.

    This proposal, if adopted, will affect an extremely small portion of the total surface of the reservoir and will not decrease recreational opportunities.

2.) Court Sheriff Bay

    Proposed Rule: No-wake speed in Court Sheriff Bay from the point of the narrow peninsula that extends in a southeasterly direction from the Canyon Ferry Village to the opposite shore northwest of Chinamen's Campground.

Court Sheriff does not have a boat ramp, however there is a campground in the bay with campsites on the shoreline of the lake. This bay received a large volume of boating traffic with many boaters launching elsewhere and beaching their boats in the bay. Court Sheriff Bay also sees swimming, shoreline fishing and non-motorized usage. FWP has taken complaints about dangerous high-speed boat operations within the bay including high-speed passes around the island. This small and often crowded bay is not compatible with high- speed boat operation. Limiting this bay to no-wake speed will make the bay safer for all users and decrease user conflicts.

This proposal, if adopted, will affect an extremely small portion of the total surface of the reservoir and will not decrease recreational opportunities.

3.) Chinaman's Bay

Proposed Rule: Limit Chinaman's Bay to no-wake speed to the mouth of the bay, 300 feet or as buoyed from the unimproved boat launch location.

Chinaman Campground receives a large volume of boating traffic during peak season. There is a campground with an unimproved boat ramp where campers and day users launch their small boat and personal watercraft. There is a significant amount of swimming, floating and fishing that occurs in the bay. FWP has taken complaints in the past about boating in this area. Restricting this bay to no-wake speed will increase safety for all users and decrease conflict in the bay.

This proposal, if adopted, will affect an extremely small portion of the total surface of the reservoir and will not decrease recreational opportunities.

4.) Kayley Bay

Proposed Rule: Limit Kayley Bay to no-wake zone as buoyed in the following described location: Kayley Bay on the northeast portion of Canyon Ferry Lake located in Township 10N, Range 1 W, Section 13 south of East Shore Drive in Lewis and Clark County. The no-wake zone would apply to the portion of the bay approximately 500 yards from the mouth of the stream entering the lake, extending southwest to the point of the bay that narrows at the peninsula at Tranquility Drive on the north side of the bay, then southeast to the opposite shore.

Kayley Bay does not have a public boat launch, but it does have numerous private launches and ramps in the narrow bay. FWP has received several complaints of boats operating in the bay at wake speed that causes damage to boats that are docked on the north shore.

5.) Hellgate Bay

Proposed Rule: Restrict the area around the Hellgate Campground boat ramp to a no-wake zone, as buoyed, in the described location: 300 feet (125 yards) southwest from the boat ramp, then extending north to the opposite north shore.

Hellgate Campground and boat launch is a very large and busy boating location on Canyon Ferry. Many boats launch and load at the site. The proposed no-wake zone would provide safety and security at the ramp for recreationists launching and loading boats.

6.) Silos Bay

Proposed Rule: Restrict Silos area to no-wake speed in the following described area: Starting at Township 8N Range 1E Section 26, south of Sheps Road on the west shoreline of Canyon Ferry Reservoir, 300 ft from the west shoreline headed south past Seamans Bay, Broadwater Bay, Sgt. Floyd Bay, York Bay, Engineer's Bay, Shield's Bay, and Gass Bay. The boundary shall end at the point just south of Gass Bay, Township 8N Range 1E Section 35.(see Attached Map).

Silos boat ramp and campground are extremely busy areas in the summer and receive a high volume of boat traffic. The Silos is the main access for the entire south end of the lake. Additionally, the campground sees heavy usage with people beaching their boats in front of campsites, fishing, swimming, floating and using human-powered watercraft. FWP has received complaints about high-speed watercraft usage in this area as well as complaints about personal watercraft. There have been boat accidents in the vicinity of the Silos as well including one in 2017 involving a collision at the boat ramp. Restricting this area to no-wake speed will increase safety for all users and decrease conflict.

This proposal if adopted will affect an extremely small portion of the total surface of the reservoir and will not decrease recreational opportunities.

7.) White Earth Bay

Proposed Rule: Restrict White Earth boat launch area to a no-wake zone 300 feet from shoreline in the described location: From the end of the boat ramp at White Earth Campground northeast to the west shoreline directly in front of the boat ramp, then southeast to the west shoreline east of the group-use pavilion at White Earth Campground.

White Earth Campground sees a lot of recreational use during the summer. Such activities include camping, fishing, boating, swimming and many other water-related activity. Campers will launch and beach watercraft in White Earth Bay. Restricting the waters to no-wake speed will ensure safety to the public in such a condensed area.

This proposal if adopted will affect an extremely small portion of the total surface area on Canyon Ferry Reservoir and will not decrease recreational opportunities.

Attachment 1.

Letter of support from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Montana Area Office
Canyon Ferry Field Office
7700 Canyon Ferry Road
Helena, MT 59602

IN REPLY REFER TO:
MT-880
2.2.3.19

JUN - 7 2018

Phil Kilbreath
Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59602

Subject: Canyon Ferry No-Wake Zone Project, Canyon Ferry Reservoir, Helena, Montana

The Bureau of Reclamation has collaborated with Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (FWP) to edit and revise Canyon Ferry Reservoir No-Wake boating zones. Reclamation has reviewed final recommended changes and fully agrees with them.

If you have any questions regarding this topic please contact me at 406-475-3922 or lholmes@usbr.gov.

Sincerely,

Lee Holmes
Assistant Facility Operations Specialist

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AW ENFORCEMENT

Attachment 2

Letter of opinion on the impacts of the proposed changes from FWP Fisheries Biologist Eric Roberts

Kilbreath, Phillip

From: Roberts, Eric
Sent: Monday, March 12, 2018 1:48 PM
To: Kilbreath, Phillip
Subject: Canyon Ferry Boating Rule Changes

Hi Phil,
I reviewed the proposed rule changes for wake restrictions on Canyon Ferry Reservoir and I would not expect the proposed changes to adversely affect fishing opportunity on Canyon Ferry. The improved safety due to lower boat speeds should benefit all recreational boaters and water users.

Eric Roberts
Fisheries Management Bureau Chief
Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-5334

Attachment 3

Letter of opinion on the impacts of the proposed changes from FWP Wildlife Biologist Adam Grove.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 998
Townsend, MT 59644
#406-266-3367
adgrove@mt.gov

Phil Kilbreath
Montana Game Warden – Boating Law Administrator
1420 E 6th ave
Helena MT, 59620

March 9, 2018

RE: Canyon Ferry Lake boating regulation change proposal

Dear Phil:

The proposed creation of additional no-wake zones on Canyon Ferry Lake would have minimal impacts on wildlife associated with those areas. Any impacts would likely be positive in the form of reducing the potential for disturbance to any waterfowl or water-birds that may utilize those areas.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Adam Grove
MFWP Wildlife Biologist – Townsend

Cc: Howard Burt, Region 3 Wildlife Manager

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

Attachment 4

Proposed new ARM language

NEW RULE I CANYON FERRY RESERVOIR – BROADWATER COUNTY

(1) In Broadwater County, Canyon Ferry Reservoir is limited to a controlled no-wake speed, as defined in ARM 12.11.101(1), within 300 feet of docks or as buoyed in the following areas:

(a) White Earth.

(2) Silos Campground is limited to a controlled no-wake speed, as defined in ARM 12.11.101(1), from shoreline to 300 feet from the shoreline between Gass Bay and Seaman's Bay, or as marked by buoys.

(3) Refer to ARM 12.11.3201 for the portion of Canyon Ferry Reservoir located in Lewis and Clark County.

12.11.3201 CANYON FERRY RESERVOIR - LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

(1) In Lewis and Clark County, Canyon Ferry Reservoir is limited to a controlled no-wake speed, as defined in ARM 12.11.101(1), within 300 feet of docks or as buoyed or described otherwise below, in the following areas:

(a) Chinamen's Bay;

~~(a) Cave Bay;~~

(b) ~~Little~~ Hellgate Bay, 300 feet southwest from the boat ramp, and extending north to the opposite shore;

(c) Magpie Bay; and;

(d) Shannon Boat Launch.

~~(d) Carp Bay; and~~

~~(e) Canyon Ferry Dam to Riverside boatramp.~~

(2) Court Sheriff Bay is limited to a controlled no-wake speed, as defined in ARM 12.11.101(1), from the mouth of the bay or as buoyed. The mouth of Court Sheriff Bay is identified as the area from the tip of the narrow peninsula that extends southeast from Canyon Ferry Village to the shore directly east.

(3) Kayley Bay is limited to a controlled no-wake speed, as defined in ARM 12.11.101(1), approximately 500 yards from the mouth of the stream entering the lake and extending southwest to the point of the bay that narrows at the peninsula at Tranquility Drive on the north side of the bay, to the opposite shore southeast, or as buoyed.

(2) remains the same but is renumbered (4).

(5) Refer to NEW RULE I for the portion of Canyon Ferry Reservoir located in Broadwater County.

12.11.3205 HAUSER RESERVOIR (1) Hauser Reservoir is located in Lewis and Clark County.

(2) Hauser Reservoir is limited to a controlled no-wake speed, as defined in ARM 12.11.101(1), in the following areas:

(a) through (e) remain the same.

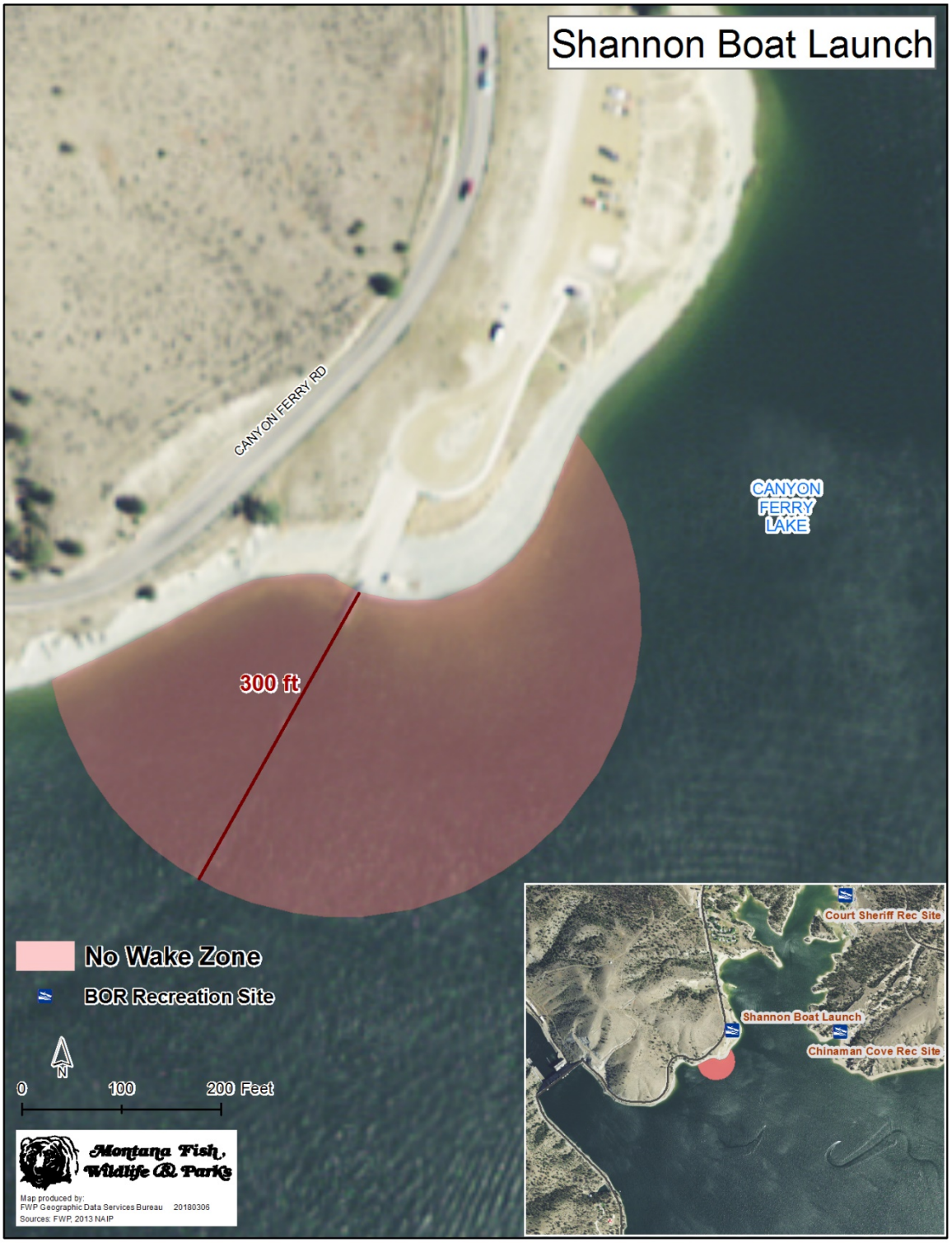
(f) York Bridge fishing access site within 300 feet of the boat ramp and dock area or as buoyed; ~~and~~

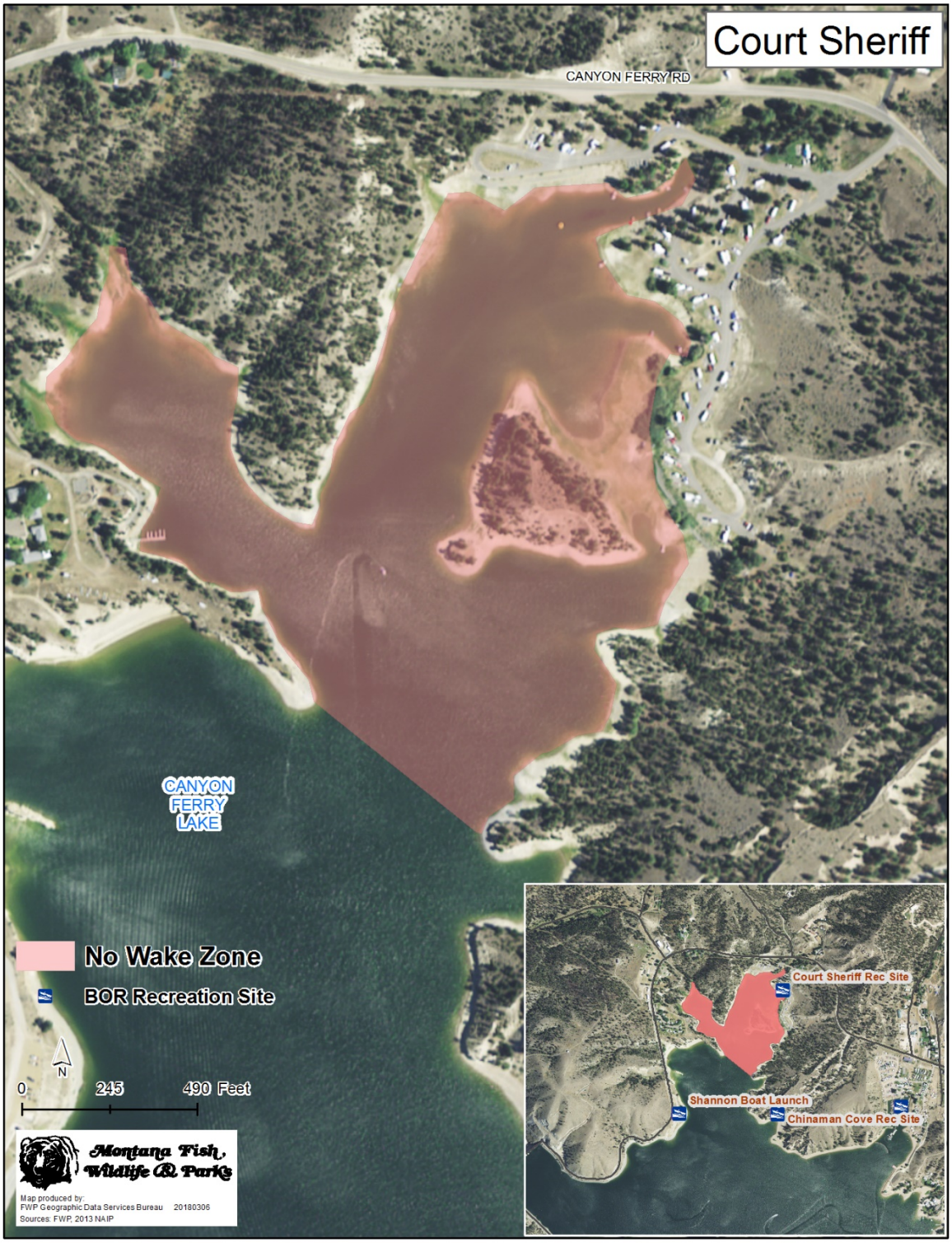
(g) White Sandy Recreation Area within 300 feet of docks and swim area or as buoyed~~.~~; and

(h) Canyon Ferry Dam to Riverside boat ramp.

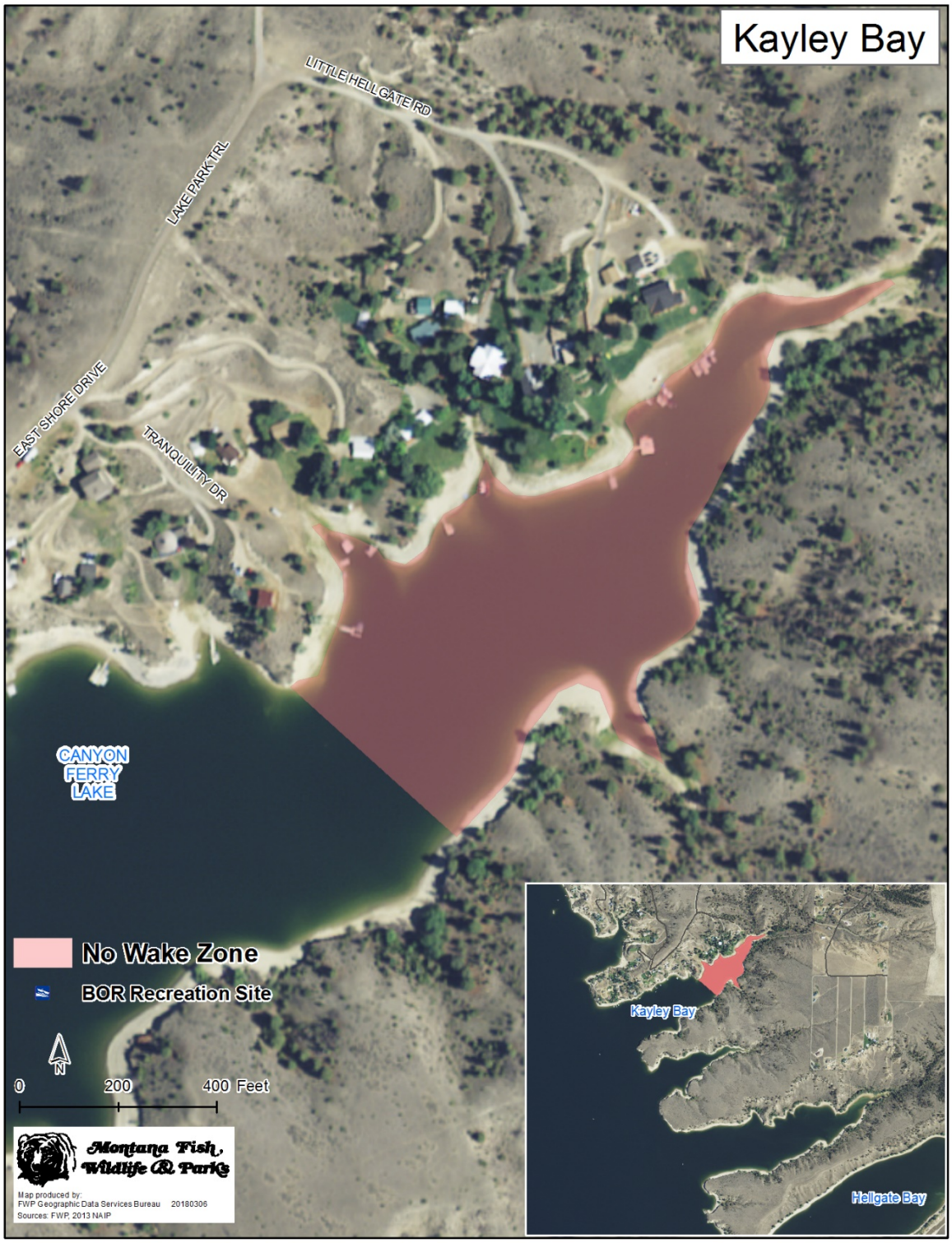
Attachment 6

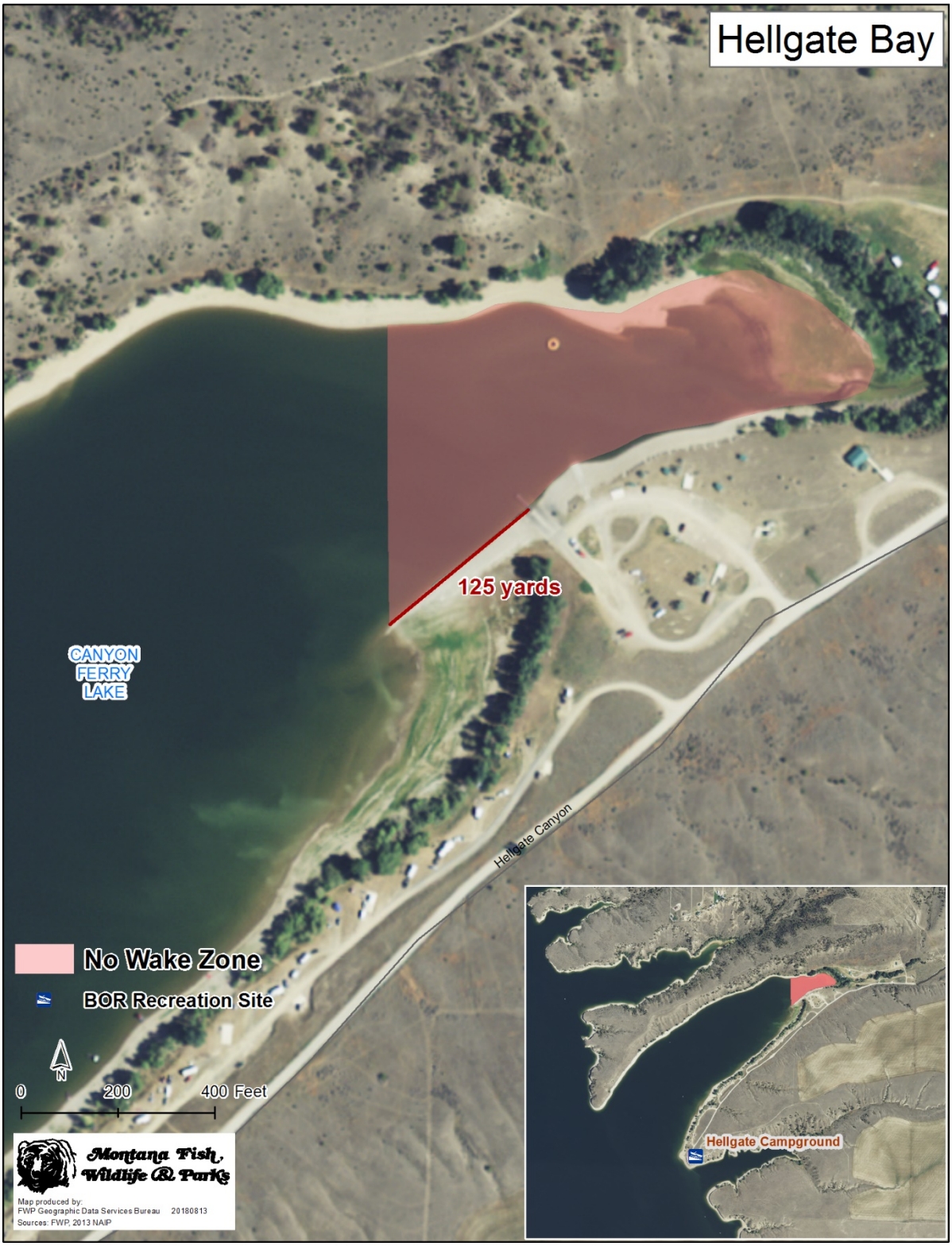
Maps of proposed no-wake restrictions.

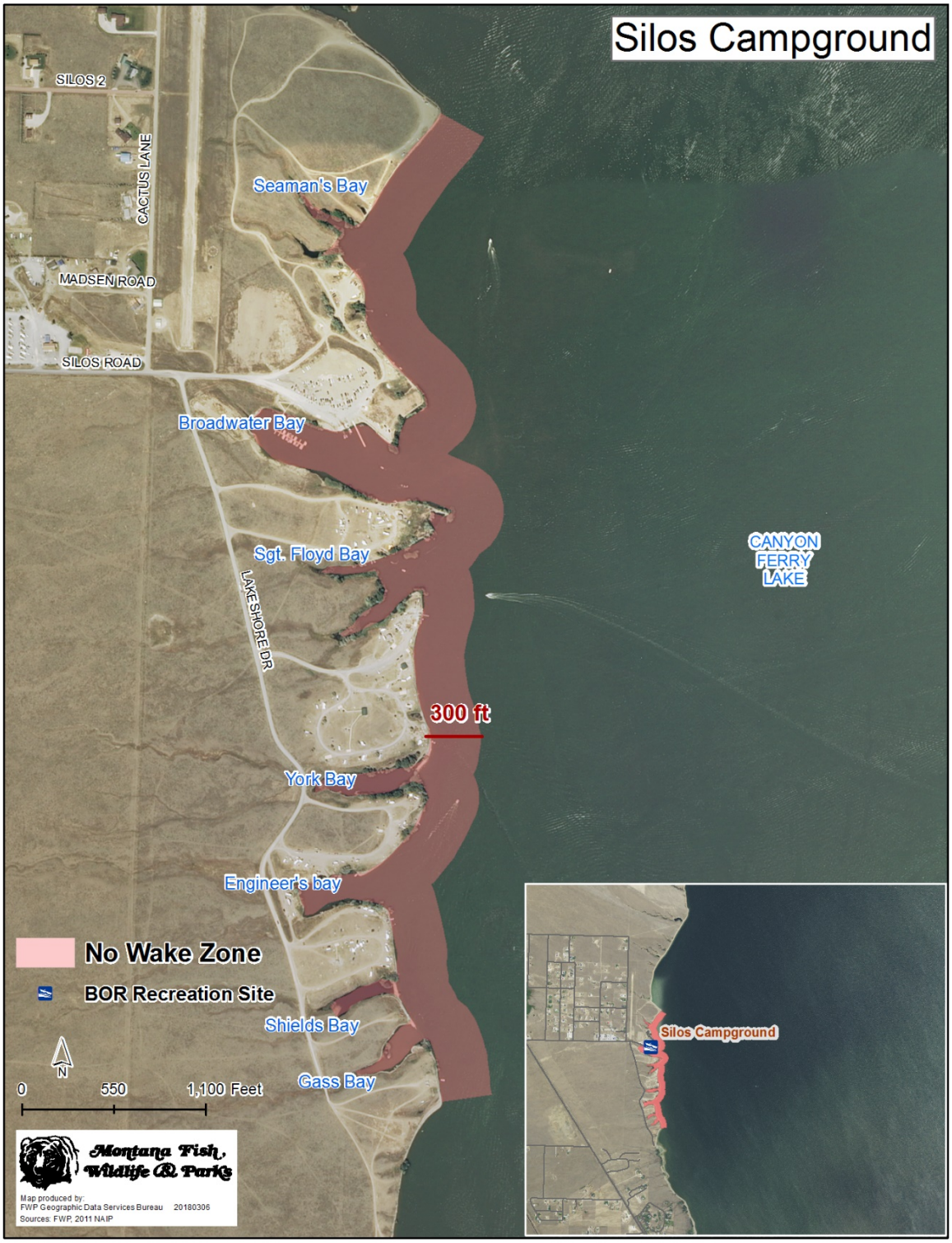



Court Sheriff
CANYON FERRY RD
CANYON FERRY LAKE
No Wake Zone
BOR Recreation Site
N
0
245
490 Feet
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Map produced by:
FWP Geographic Data Services Bureau 20180306
Sources: FWP, 2013 NAIP
Court Sheriff Rec Site
Shannon Boat Launch
Chinaman Cove Rec Site

Chinaman Bay
Chinaman Gulch
300 ft
CANYON FERRY LAKE
No Wake Zone
BOR Recreation Site
N
0
100
200 Feet
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Map produced by:
FWP Geographic Data Services Bureau 20180306
Sources: FWP, 2013 NAIP
Court Sheriff Rec Site
Shannon Boat Launch
Chinaman Cove Rec Site


Kayley Bay
LITTLE HELLGATE RD
LAKE PARK TRL
EAST SHORE DRIVE
TRANQUILITY DR
CANYON FERRY LAKE
No Wake Zone
BOR Recreation Site
N
0
200
400 Feet
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Map produced by:
FWP Geographic Data Services Bureau 20180306
Sources: FWP, 2013 NAIP
Kayley Bay
Hellgate Bay


Hellgate Bay
125 yards
CANYON
FERRY
LAKE
Hellgate Canyon
No Wake Zone
BOR Recreation Site
N
0
200
400 Feet
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Map produced by:
FWP Geographic Data Services Bureau 20180813
Sources: FWP, 2013 NAIP
Hellgate Campground


Silos Campground
SILOS 2
CACTUS LANE
MADSEN ROAD
SILOS ROAD
Seaman's Bay
Broadwater Bay
Sgt. Floyd Bay
LAKESHORE DR
CANYON FERRY LAKE
300 ft
York Bay
Engineer's bay
Shields Bay
Gass Bay
No Wake Zone
BOR Recreation Site
N
0
550
1,100 Feet
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Map produced by:
FWP Geographic Data Services Bureau 20180306
Sources: FWP, 2011 NAIP
Silos Campground

White Earth Campground
CANYON FERRY LAKE
300 ft
BEAVER CREEK ROAD
No Wake Zone
BOR Recreation Site
N
0
150
300 Feet
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Map produced by:
FWP Geographic Data Services Bureau 20180306
Sources: FWP, 2013 NAIP
White Earth Campground