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Millions of acres of Conservation Reserve Program grasslands converted to crops in Montana since 2007

(Source: USDA)

New FWP tagline

What do kayakers, elk hunters, fly anglers, backpackers, and bird watchers have in common? They all enjoy being part of the outdoors. In Montana, that desire is almost universal. “In other states, people go outside,” says Greg Lemon, head of the FWP Communications and Education Division. “But in Montana, the outside is already inside us. It’s in our DNA.”

Recognizing that deeply and widely held value, FWP recently released a new agency tagline, “The Outside Is In Us All.” Developed in partnership with Missoula-based Partners Creative, the statement highlights the common ground shared by all who recreate outdoors. “It also reminds everyone that FWP conserves and manages the rivers, trails, fisheries, parks, wildlife, and public access that make so many outdoor opportunities possible,” Lemon says. ■



Belt Creek in Sluice Boxes State Park

STATE PARKS

Making it easy to visit

Over the past decade, visitation to Montana state parks has doubled. Yet many people are still unaware of just what those 55 state parks have to offer. Outdoor writers Erin Madison and Kristen Inbody can help.

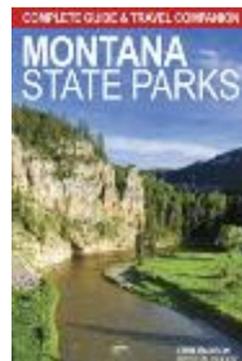
Their essential *Montana State Parks* guide provides summaries of 54 state parks across Montana (Milltown, the state’s newest state park, wasn’t open when the writers researched their book). The pair criss-crossed Montana to visit every single site, calling their year-long adventure the Extreme Montana State Parks Challenge. “Every park was a chance to experience the state more deeply. I fell in love with Montana all over again,” says Inbody.

For each park, the writers include information on amenities such as boating, hiking, swimming, and camping;

open hours and days; contact information; and a brief description and history. Each chapter also features a map, photos, and a “Don’t Miss” highlight, such as the scenic tents-only campsites at Wayfarers State Park on Flathead Lake and the buffalo jump at Rosebud Battlefield State Park.

“This is such a great way to realize all the different options our parks provide,” says Beth Shumate, head of the FWP Parks Division. “Boating, fishing, interpretive hikes, special events, cultural sites, car tour camping, yurts—you name it, we’ve got it at our state parks, and it’s all here in this fantastic book.”

Montana State Parks is available for \$19.95 at local bookstores. A portion of sales is donated to Montana’s Outdoor Legacy Foundation to support state parks. ■

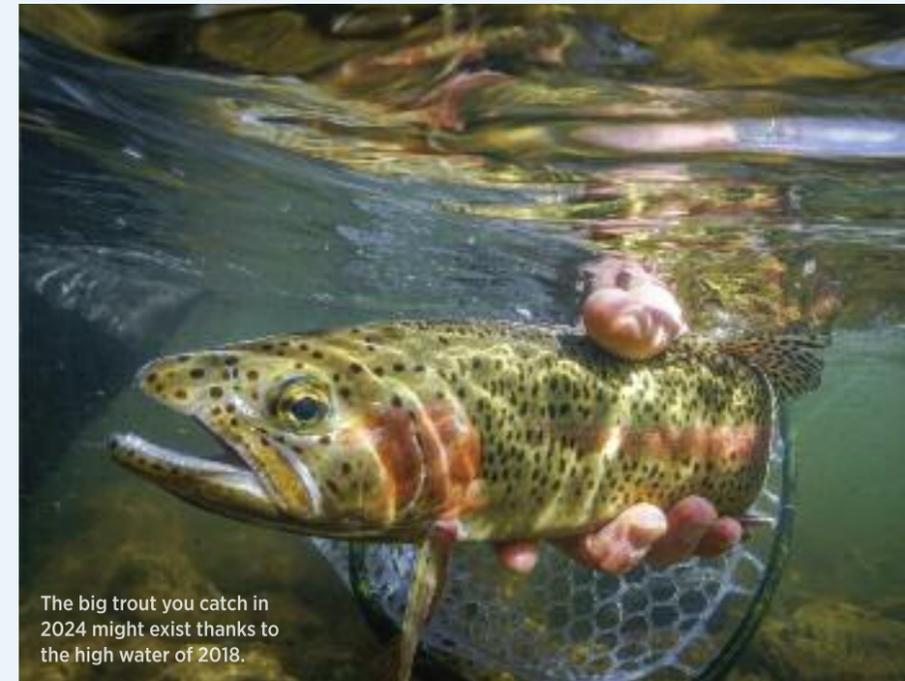


FISHERIES

Welcome the high water

With mountain snowpack well above average across western Montana, spring runoff caused rivers to roil with high water well into June. That was tough on anglers, already bummed out over what seemed like the world’s longest winter. But all that big water is great for trout.

Heavy river flows clean out gravel where trout spawn and aquatic insects live. The flooding flushes silt and vegetation that smothers trout eggs and clogs mayfly, caddis fly, and stonefly habitat. “Heavy flows also move gravel around, scouring it from one place and depositing it downstream on the next bend, creating new habitat,” says Grant Grisak, FWP regional fisheries manager in Great Falls.



The big trout you catch in 2024 might exist thanks to the high water of 2018.

Strong spring runoff also creates more habitat for young trout by inundating floodplains and side channels where the tiny fish find food and avoid predators. This is especially important during the first few months of life when young fish are most vulnerable.

It’s now summer, and water levels have finally dropped, rivers are fishable, and anglers are happy. They can take added pleasure knowing that the high water that delayed their fishing improved habitat and created healthier fisheries. ■

Two essential dries

Walk into any Montana fly shop and you’ll quickly be overwhelmed by the multitude of dry-fly patterns: PMD emergers, *Baetis* cripples, slack-water and downwing caddis, Trudes. Wouldn’t it be great if you could just use one or two flies, in various sizes, and forget the rest?

Dave Whitlock says you can. The author, instructor, and creator of the Dave’s Hopper and other famous patterns told *Field & Stream* recently that the Parachute Adams and Royal Wulff may be the two most effective dry-fly patterns ever invented. The Adams is what’s known as a “suggestive” pattern, not meant to replicate an actual floating insect but rather resemble something generically “buggy” on the surface. “It matches almost any dun mayfly or caddis you’ll come across,” Whitlock says. The “parachute” version has a white hair top that makes it easier to see. The other go-to pattern is the Royal Wulff, “basically an attractor fly [that] looks real buggy,” says Whitlock.

Whitlock suggests carrying both patterns in a range of sizes. Use flies that are the same size as or smaller than the bugs you see on the water surface. “If you err in terms of fly size selection, be too small rather than too large,” he says. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CARTOON BY MIKE MORAN; JOHN LAMBING; ED COYLE; SHUTTERSTOCK; MONTANA OUTDOORS