

Upper Madison River FAS Infrastructure Improvements

- **Brian McGeehan (consolidating input from John Way, Dan and Nancy Delekta, Joe Dilschneider, Julie Eaton and numerous guides)**

Highest Priority Level

Varney FAS

Problems:

- Single ramp causes a back log, especially late in day when boats are coming off the water
- Current ramp is in an awkward location on the river which increases time to launch and retrieve boats due to shallow water in front of ramp
- Parking area needs improved
- More area needed for boat rigging
- Two camp sites very close to rigging and ramp area

Recommended Solution:

- Replace current ramp with 2 ramps further downstream (or possibly dig out area in front of current ramp and add 2nd ramp further downstream)
- Current ramp is in a difficult area to launch/retrieve boats
- Remove first two camping spots downstream of current ramp and repurpose this as a boat rigging area with signage
- Organize parking spaces for increased efficiency

2nd Highest Priority Level

Lyons Bridge

Problems:

- Lyons is the first location that float fishing launches are allowed, and also serves the longest reach of river before another access. It is the highest used FAS on the upper river and the dominate us is for launching boats. As a result it can get congested.
- The current boat launches are near the downstream end of the FAS which provides limited boat mooring opportunities while trucks are being moved after launching (requires pulling boats up through swift water after launching)
- Limited parking
- Lack of signage results in some folks permanently parking in boat staging area at times
- Large boulders around current ramps make mooring difficult

Recommended Solutions:

- Add a single boat launch at upstream end of FAS

- Provide signage to designate boat rigging only areas (with note that day parking is located in rear of FAS)
- Expand parking, designate parking locations
- Possibly improve mooring options at current downstream ramps, address large rocks

3rd Highest Priority

McAtee Bridge

Problems:

- Single ramp can slow take access/take outs
- Large boulders upstream of ramp adds challenges to mooring boats
- Unorganized parking

Recommended Solutions:

- Add a second ramp (or widen to double ramp similar to Windy)
- Organize parking by increase parking area (if space allows) and adding signage, designated parking and rigging zones)
- Improve mooring area near ramp to allow easier access if possible

4th Highest Priority

Storey Ditch

Problems:

- Limited parking, not organized
- Poor boat ramp

Recommended Solutions:

- Add either a second launch or improve current launch to a double wide concrete launch
- Improve and organize parking

5th Highest Priority

Ennis FAS

Problems:

- Annual ice flows can create delayed openings, damage to site
- Single ramp occasionally limits take out time (launching not a problem)

Recommended Solutions:

- Investigate “site hardening” to reduce closure time in spring
- Possibly add a concrete double ramp or add a second launch area upstream (current dirt ramp is fairly wide but a concrete double ramp would make it obvious that two boats can take out at the same time.

- Increase parking area, improve and organize parking (possibly utilize some current camping sites close to the river)

6th Highest Priority

Pine Butte

Problems:

- Limited parking, not organized, a pioneered 2-track along the highway
- Poor boat ramp; a small dirt ramp in the willows

Recommended Solutions:

- Add concrete ramp
- Improve parking and access road

Problems:

- Insufficient parking capacity and poorly organized
- Ramp has big ditches that causes rigs to bottom out en route
- River at low flows has marginal water level for launching and retrieving boats

Recommended Solutions:

- Improve access road to ramp which is rutted and investigate deepening channel in front of ramp which is very shallow at lower flows
- Reorganize parking area (add signage and designated parking spaces, add designated boat rigging area)
- NOTE – this is a low use site now, but would be a higher priority if float fishing is adopted as a permanent option

8 mile ford

Problems:

- Insufficient parking capacity and poorly organized
- Access road/Ramp has big ditches that causes rigs to bottom out in route to the ramp
- River at low flows has marginal water level for launching and retrieving boats

Recommended Solutions:

- Improve access road to ramp which is rutted and investigate deepening channel in front of ramp which is very shallow at lower flows
- Reorganize parking area (add signage and designated parking spaces for more efficient use of current space, add designated boat rigging area)

7th Highest Priority

Palisades

Problems:

- Heavy Willows line mooring area for boats, especially downstream of ramps

Recommended Solutions:

- Cut some paths every 10 feet between willows to make it easier to get to and from boats anchored in moorage areas

Burnt Tree

Problems:

- Limited parking, not organized

Recommended Solutions:

- Increase parking area, improve and organize parking

No Changes

- 1) Ruby
- 2) Valley Garden

Pending ** depends on long term fate of float fishing in current upper wade area**

Raynolds Pass (preparation for proposed float fishing, or perhaps wait to see if the trial window is adopted permanently before addressing increased use)

Problems:

- If float fishing is eventually permitted below Raynolds Pass, there will be significantly more use at this FAS (site is largely adequate if this ends up remaining an access for boat in access only vs allowing float fishing from boats which would dramatically increase use of this access).
- One ramp will be a bottle neck on any the days that fishing from boats is permitted
- There will not be enough parking if the access is used for float fishing launches

Recommended Solutions:

- Possibly wait for the trial season to run before making improvements, there has been a lot of concern about this proposal and there may be strong support to return to the status quo
- Add a second boat launch if float fishing from boats is permanently adopted
- Increase parking if float fishing is permanently adopted
- Organize parking and rigging areas with signage