



MONTANA **FWP**

Montana State Parks and Outdoor Recreation 2021 Reservation Program Report

The Montana State Parks campsite reservation program helps visitors plan and prepare by providing the assurance that a campsite (or other facility) will be waiting for them upon arrival at their destination state park. This service affords visitors an improved opportunity to travel further to explore the state park system and enhances their ability to camp with family and friends.

Montana entered an MOU with Idaho State Parks and Recreation in 2011 to establish a campsite reservation program under Idaho's contract with ReserveAmerica. Montana's reservation program went live March 30, 2011.

Since implementation of the reservation program in 2011, it has become Montana State Parks business management system, incorporating not only overnight lodging, but an integrated system for the management of all park facilities, collection of park revenue and enterprise sales.

Facilities

Originally 20 parks were set up in the system for campsite reservations. Since, we have added reservable day use group areas at 4 state parks, bike-in/hike-in camping opportunities at 5 state parks and reservable boat slips were made available to visitors at the Finley Point Unit of Flathead Lake State Park. In 2017, we upgraded a portion of Logan State Park by adding electrical hookups and added boat slips. In 2018 we completed a campground renovation and expansion project adding additional campsites to Finley Point Unit of Flathead Lake State Park.

In 2018, several parks moved to 100% reservability during the peak season (May – September). We increased the number of reservable sites at Beavertail Hill, Black Sandy, Brush Lake, Cooney (exception Marshal Cove), Lewis & Clark Caverns, Placid Lake, Salmon Lake, Makoshika (exception rustic campsites) and Tongue River Reservoir (electrical sites only).

This change has improved the efficiency for these parks with minimal user conflicts. Tongue River Reservoir also designated campsites in the system from the dispersed camping areas. In 2021 Painted Rocks State Parks started accepting reservations for campsites.



In 2020, all parks moved to a 6-month/1-day reservation window.

Point of Sale

In 2013 a Point of Sale (POS) function was added to the reservation system. With the addition of the POS, staff can account for non-reservation revenues in the system. Examples of non-reservation revenue includes day use fees, disbursed camping, showers, boat launch fees and enterprise sales. Once the POS was added to the system, several parks were added utilizing the POS function. These sites included undesignated campsite locations as well as day use parks.

Starting in 2015 we added the centralized POS system to our visitor centers.

Registered Camping Utilization

With the increase in visitation, it is important to understand the number of registered campers at State Parks. In 2021 there were 119,791 registered park users (overnight and day use facilities). This was a decrease of 1.23% from the 2020 calendar year of 121,280. For calendar year 2021, 64% of registered users were Montana residents and 36% were non-resident. However, these numbers do not account for disbursed camping or parks whose inventory is not tracked in the reservation program.

Statewide the average length of stay in 2021 was 3.14 nights which was an increase from the 2020 average stay of 3.07 nights.

Reservation Parks

Bannack	Hell Creek	Salmon Lake
Beavertail Hill	Lake Elmo (<i>Day Use Pavilion</i>)	Spring Meadow Lake (<i>Day Use Pavilion</i>)
Big Arm	Lake Mary Ronan	Thompson Falls
Black Sandy	Lewis & Clark Caverns	Tongue River Reservoir
Brush Lake	Logan	Wayfarers
Cooney	Makoshika	West Shore
Finley Point	Missouri Headwaters	Whitefish Lake
Giant Springs (<i>Day Use Group Areas</i>)	Painted Rocks	
	Placid Lake	

POS*/Facility Management

Ackley Lake	Lone Pine	Rosebud Battlefield
Chief Plenty Coups	Lost Creek	Smith River
Clarks Lookout	Medicine Rocks	Thompson Chain of Lakes
Council Grove	Mill Town	Travers' Rest
First Peoples Buffalo Jump	Montana Headquarters	Yellow Bay
Frenchtown Pond	Painted Rocks	Wild Horse Island
Les Mason	Pirogue Island	

* Point of sales (POS) is used for non-reservation revenue including, but not limited to, day use fees, disbursed camping, showers, boat launch fees and enterprise sales.

**Statewide Occupied Nights
Fiscal Years 2011-2021**

Year	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Total
2011	-	-	-	8,677	8,677
2012	32,920	1,180	135	13,748	47,983
2013	32,369	924	285	16,358	49,936
2014	34,151	1,374	272	16,978	52,775
2015	35,592	1,551	408	19,040	56,591
2016	36,416	1,929	321	20,639	59,305
2017	38,095	1,541	396	21,576	61,608
2018	36,758	1,437	260	22,289	60,744
2019	40,330	1,378	266	21,405	63,379
2020	41,589	1,350	461	26,594	69,994
2021	49,284	3,315	565	27,730	80,894
2022	44,259	2,912			47,171

Program started in the 4th quarter of FY2011.

Average Length of Stay CY 2012-2021										
Park	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bannack	1.36	1.49	1.39	1.45	1.42	1.44	1.45	1.51	1.49	2.95
Beavertail Hill	1.39	1.43	1.49	1.54	1.49	1.52	1.49	1.54	1.64	2.49
Big Arm	2.10	2.08	2.10	2.09	2.05	2.21	2.26	2.24	2.24	2.69
Black Sandy	2.51	2.39	2.3	2.44	2.61	2.65	2.55	2.49	2.57	2.66
Brush Lake	2.31	1.73	2.37	2.02	2.15	1.89	1.80	2.19	2.29	3.34
Cooney	1.71	1.82	2.06	2.01	1.98	1.89	2.00	2.03	2.01	4.46
Finley Point	2.21	2.12	2.43	2.36	2.37	2.15	2.22	2.32	2.36	2.66
Hell Creek	3.23	3.26	3.39	3.32	3.25	3.30	3.10	3.22	3.23	2.03
Lake Mary Ronan	2.21	2.38	2.52	2.64	2.55	2.42	2.38	2.48	2.44	3.13
Lewis & Clark Caverns	1.28	1.30	1.34	1.34	1.39	1.40	1.43	1.45	1.57	2.91
Logan	2.17	2.41	2.39	2.38	2.35	2.45	2.49	2.71	2.53	2.76
Makoshika	1.80	1.34	1.52	1.17	1.23	1.19	1.25	1.30	1.36	2.98
Missouri Headwaters	1.23	1.28	1.32	1.37	1.45	1.38	1.48	1.51	1.67	2.36
Painted Rocks**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.80
Placid Lake	2.40	2.37	2.53	2.37	2.44	2.57	2.42	2.54	2.38	2.76
Salmon Lake	2.02	2.12	2.18	2.11	1.93	1.92	2.08	2.06	2.01	2.61
Thompson Falls	1.48	1.61	1.66	1.63	1.65	1.73	1.77	1.76	1.90	2.62
Tongue River Reservoir	2.61	2.62	2.63	2.70	2.67	2.66	2.69	2.52	2.55	4.42
Wayfarers	1.95	2.00	1.87	1.80	1.83	1.81	1.84	1.89	1.92	2.61
West Shore	1.94	1.96	2.10	2.07	1.99	1.96	1.95	1.98	1.97	2.76
Whitefish Lake	1.94	2.02	1.99	1.93	1.90	1.92	1.94	1.88	1.99	2.39
Yellow Bay*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.20	2.31

*Campsite information entered in system started mid season 2020.

**Reservations started in 2021.

Resident vs. Non-Resident
Registered Campers
Calendar Year 2012-2021

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
State Park	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident	Resident	Non Resident
Bannack	791	758	788	613	1,361	1,123	1,321	1,194	1,845	1,202	2,084	1,775	1,878	1,857	1,750	1,806	2,146	1,802	2,288	2,149
Beavertail Hill	1,514	1,873	2,062	2,507	2,131	2,466	2,300	2,662	2,431	2,358	1,982	2,708	2,220	3,171	2,151	8,955	2,715	2,873	2,235	2,957
Big Arm	3,405	2,370	3,814	2,804	3,454	2,850	3,825	2,786	5,075	2,504	4,377	2,558	4,727	2,207	4,650	2,278	5,450	2,278	4,445	2,248
Black Sandy	2,297	352	3,283	667	3,281	743	3,504	733	3,348	811	3,246	910	3,372	1,170	3,066	1,052	4,671	877	3,287	1,096
Brush Lake	220	155	213	101	133	143	95	100	397	81	180	152	193	146	194	240	506	319	430	234
Cooney	8,010	666	9,051	398	7,073	388	7,975	450	9,179	508	10,331	874	9,539	782	8,185	777	11,816	958	10,598	1,518
Finley Point	1,310	964	1,521	1,256	1,486	1,081	1,499	1,153	2,009	971	1,543	1,256	1,803	1,538	2,194	1,594	2,890	1,666	2,834	1,732
Hell Creek	3,590	457	4,380	527	4,425	530	4,877	668	4,130	705	3,735	737	3,934	634	3,204	555	3,253	604	2,145	578
Lake Mary Ronan	2,285	593	2,434	663	2,063	586	2,459	531	2,814	669	2,797	769	2,635	839	2,791	755	3,546	799	3,171	877
Lewis & Clark Caverns	2,013	3,896	3,470	6,144	3,626	5,786	4,227	6,378	4,296	6,626	4,387	6,986	4,710	6,977	4,648	6,817	4,788	5,591	4,602	6,966
Logan	1,895	693	2,054	676	2,079	632	1,846	573	2,022	577	2,216	710	2,073	768	2,111	897	2,952	974	2,931	1,146
Makoshika	139	534	370	982	471	975	459	1,158	1,051	992	1,699	1,639	1,011	1,574	877	1,601	1,626	3,076	2,769	3,880
Missouri Headwaters	1,281	1,487	1,279	1,919	1,466	1,493	1,518	1,427	2,439	1,085	1,833	1,910	1,869	1,821	1,840	1,831	2,029	1,826	1,883	2,198
Painted Rocks**																			539	88
Placid Lake	3,689	502	3,968	655	4,112	601	3,997	709	4,704	646	3,663	728	4,663	867	4,426	788	5,931	891	4,668	1,038
Salmon Lake	1,720	665	1,761	700	1,807	783	1,995	799	2,283	960	1,761	1,097	2,016	1,072	2,177	1,168	2,997	903	2,280	1,138
Thompson Falls	515	699	746	842	690	738	600	849	974	819	1,033	980	834	1,085	1,019	1,004	1,597	1,230	1,217	1,287
Tongue River Reservoir	6,910	1,389	7,724	1,522	8,584	1,878	9,283	2,102	10,139	1,763	9,532	2,028	10,734	2,291	11,162	2,532	14,601	2,828	10,770	2,565
Wayfarers	2,058	2,045	1,924	1,910	2,113	2,474	2,678	2,469	2,895	2,257	2,979	2,917	2,713	2,264	2,740	2,477	3,370	2,724	2,732	2,811
West Shore	1,773	1,897	1,454	1,455	1,734	2,083	1,979	2,139	2,011	2,263	1,753	2,233	1,948	2,072	1,819	2,280	2,489	2,533	2,616	2,652
Whitefish Lake	886	2,299	1,140	2,203	1,160	2,666	916	2,654	1,185	2,429	917	2,474	1,173	2,793	1,027	2,790	1,488	2,534	1,264	2,749
Yellow Bay																	21	15	252	293
Totals	46,301	24,294	53,436	28,544	53,249	30,019	57,353	31,534	65,227	30,226	62,048	35,441	64,045	35,928	62,031	42,197	80,882	37,301	69,956	42,200

*Data in this table is for actual campers registered and does not include disbursed camping or primitive park camping. Figures are not associated with visitation data.

**Started collecting site information in 2021.

**Camper Nights
2012-2020**

State Park	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bannack	2,107	2,087	3,453	3,647	4,327	5,557	5,397	5,370	5,883	13,089
Beavertail Hill	4,708	6,534	6,850	7,641	7,136	7,129	8,056	17,103	9,164	12,928
Big Arm	12,128	13,765	13,238	13,817	15,537	15,326	15,691	15,519	17,311	18,004
Black Sandy	6,649	9,441	9,255	10,338	10,855	11,013	11,593	10,254	14,258	11,659
Brush Lake	866	543	654	394	1,028	627	610	950	1,889	2,218
Cooney	14,836	17,197	15,302	165,934	19,180	21,177	20,597	18,193	25,676	54,037
Finley Point	5,026	5,887	6,238	6,259	7,063	6,018	7,418	8,788	10,752	12,146
Hell Creek	13,072	15,997	16,797	18,409	15,714	14,758	14,182	12,104	12,458	5,528
Lake Mary Ronan	6,360	7,371	6,675	7,894	8,882	8,630	8,257	8,794	10,602	12,670
Lewis & Clark Caverns	7,564	12,498	12,612	14,211	15,182	15,922	16,733	16,624	16,295	33,663
Logan	5,616	6,579	6,479	5,757	6,108	7,169	7,062	5,182	9,933	11,253
Makoshika	1,211	1,812	2,198	1,892	2,513	3,972	3,244	3,221	6,395	19,814
Missouri Headwaters	3,405	4,093	3,906	4,035	5,110	5,165	5,459	5,543	6,438	9,631
Painted Rocks										1,129
Placid Lake	10,058	10,957	11,924	11,153	13,054	11,285	13,388	13,244	16,236	15,749
Salmon Lake	4,818	5,217	5,548	5,895	6,259	5,487	6,417	6,891	7,839	8,921
Thompson Falls	1,797	2,557	2,370	2,362	2,958	3,482	3,398	3,560	5,371	6,560
Tongue River Reservoir	21,660	24,225	27,515	30,740	31,778	30,750	35,046	34,509	44,444	58,941
Wayfarers	8,001	7,668	8,578	9,265	9,428	10,672	9,179	9,860	11,700	14,467
West Shore	7,120	5,702	8,016	8,524	8,505	7,813	7,834	8,116	9,893	14,540
Whitefish Lake	6,179	6,753	7,614	6,890	6,867	6,511	7,705	7,176	8,004	9,591
Yellow Bay									37	1,259

*Camper nights based number of campers multiplied by average length of stay.

Reservation Activity 2011-2021 (Call Center and Internet)			
CY 2011 (April-December) Reservations: 9,137 Changes: 416 Cancelations: 1,046 <i>Total Transactions: 10,599</i>	CY 2012 (January-December) Reservations: 10,401 Changes: 408 Cancelations: 1,285 <i>Total Transactions: 12,098</i>	CY 2013* (January-December) Reservations: 12,742 Changes: 365 Cancelations: 1,548 <i>Total Transactions: 14,685</i>	CY 2014* (January-December) Reservations: 14,186 Changes: 520 Cancelations: 1,871 <i>Total Transactions: 16,577</i>
CY 2015* (January-December) Reservations: 16,185 Changes: 635 Cancelations: 2,525 <i>Total Transactions: 19,363</i>	CY 2016* (January-December) Reservations: 17,828 Changes: 542 Cancelations: 2,622 <i>Total Transactions: 20,992</i>	CY 2017* (January-December) Reservations: 19,485 Changes: 646 Cancelations: 3,024 <i>Total Transactions: 23,155</i>	CY 2018* (January-December) Reservations: 21,117 Changes: 710 Cancelations: 2,977 <i>Total Transactions: 24,804</i>
CY 2019** (January-December) Reservations: 19,535 Changes: 1,015 Cancelations: 2,697 <i>Total Transactions: 23,247</i>	CY 2020*** (January-December) Reservations: 31,036 Changes: 710 Cancelations: 6,053 <i>Total Transactions: 37,799</i>	CY 2021**** (January-December) Reservations: 32,737 Changes: 1,048 Cancelations: 6,926 <i>Total Transactions: 40,711</i>	
<p>*Reservation transactions above include reservations taken for day use facilities at Giant Springs, Lake Elmo, Spring Meadow Lake and Travelers' Rest State Parks.</p> <p>**In 2019 we changed the minimum window for the 2020 season to 6 months.</p> <p>***The higher number of cancelations is due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>**** Painted Rocks State Park started taking reservations in 2021.</p>			

Registration Methods 2011 – 2021			
CY2011 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 5,951 Call Center 2,084 Nights Booked 22,127 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 15,630 Nights Booked 24,325	CY2012 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 7,170 Call Center 1,798 Nights Booked 24,220 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 16,297 Nights Booked 26,391	CY2013 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 8,944 Call Center 2,035 Nights Booked 28,936 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 16,064 Nights Booked 26,262	CY2014 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 10,012 Call Center 1,731 Nights Booked 30,373 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 15,541 Nights Booked 25,971
CY2015 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 11,816 Call Center 1,723 Nights Booked 34,825 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 15,351 Nights Booked 25,215	CY2016 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 12,886 Call Center 1,614 Nights Booked 35,494 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 16,382 Nights Booked 26,475	CY2017 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 14,662 Call Center 1,397 Nights Booked 40,554 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 16,422 Nights Booked 26,941	CY2018 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 16,173 Call Center 1,518 Nights Booked 45,450 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 16,422 Nights Booked 26,858
CY2019 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 14,466 Call Center 1,380 Nights Booked 36,550 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 15,390 Nights Booked 25,271	CY2020 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 21,567 Call Center 1,213 Nights Booked 52,327 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 16,655 Nights Booked 30,329	CY2021 <i>Reservations:</i> Internet 22,122 Call Center 946 Nights Booked 52,608 <i>Field:</i> Walk-ins 14,718 Nights Booked 25,163	