

Flathead National Forest

Recreation Fee Program Accomplishment Highlights 2019

Cary Miller, Custer-Gallatin National Forest, Share the Experience Photo Contest 2017

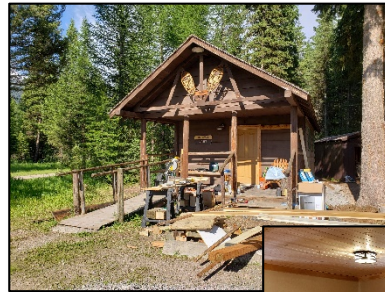
Polebridge River Access

In 2019, the Polebridge River Access Site on the North Fork of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River fell victim to the forces of the river, as the natural migration of the channel eroded the bank and boat launch of the original site. The forest hired a local contractor using \$16,000 of outfitter and guide permit fees to build a new river access and boat launch downstream from the original location. The work consisted of a new gravel loop and staging area, a new native material boat launch, new signage, barrier rock, an information kiosk and a gravel path leading to the vault toilet. Recreation fee dollars also funded a crew to remove remnants of the 1964-flood-destroyed Belton Bridge from the Middle Fork of the Flathead near the West Glacier River Access Site. Located just off-shore, this debris was a potential navigation hazard for outfitters and the public.



New Polebridge River Access Site

Owl Creek Cabin Makeover



Owl Creek Cabin repairs and new indoor furniture



Recreation Fee Dollars

Recreation fee dollars are an investment in outdoor recreation. They support and enhance:

- Public safety
- Recreation site maintenance and improvements
- Educational experiences
- Informational wayside exhibits
- Youth programs and partnerships
- Interpretive programs

Current and future generations benefit as 80-95% of the funds are reinvested in the facilities and services that visitors enjoy, use, and value.

The forest spent \$14,000 in recreation fee funds to repair and refit Owl Creek Cabin in 2019. Recreation staff lifted the cabin, poured new foundation piers, added new joists and installed a new drainage system to move water away from the cabin. They also performed a complete interior renovation by upgrading the wiring and ran it behind the drywall, purchasing new furniture, improving the lighting, refinishing the floors and replacing the woodstove with a propane fireplace. The Northwest Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen custom built and installed new cabinetry. This investment will sustain Owl Creek Cabin long into the future.

Mission Lookout

Mission Lookout is one of the forest’s more popular rentals. With expert local volunteer help, the forest invested \$4,300 in recreation fee funds to replace the lookout roof, adding an extra layer of ice and water underlayment and repairing water damage. They redesigned the trapdoor to meet the standard design for this style of lookout, with all counterweights tied structurally into the trap door construction. They also installed new safety railings to tighten the gap between rails from 9 inches to just 4.75 inches.

Mission Lookout was built in 1959. The lookout consists of a small bed, two fold-up cots, propane cooking stove and an outhouse. This 40 foot wooden tower was used by staff for fire detection but is now used for the overnight enjoyment by the public.



Mission Lookout



Scenic views found throughout the forest

Northern Region



Contacts

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Revenue & Expenditures

Revenue*	Forest	Region
Recreation Fees	\$160,901	\$2,309,376
Special Uses	\$268,252	\$1,252,856
Interagency Passes	\$15,380	\$122,160
Total	\$444,533	\$3,684,392
Expenditures	Forest	Region
Repair & Maintenance	\$225,898	\$1,810,965
Visitor Services	\$97,766	\$898,833
Law Enforcement	\$0	\$73,214
Habitat Restoration	\$84,131	\$107,037
Fee Agreements	\$0	\$14,720
Collections/Overhead	\$0	\$279,237
Total	\$407,795	\$3,184,006

*Carryover funds will be used for large projects and upcoming startup costs.