



News

Montana State Parks • 1420 E. 6th Avenue • Helena, MT 59620

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 20, 2013

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Public Comment Sought on Milltown State Park: Closure Extension of the Blackfoot River and Clark Fork River Bank

-Comments due by Friday, March 22-

(Helena, MT) – Montana State Parks (stateparks.mt.gov) announced today that it is seeking public comment on a closure extension for the Blackfoot River and Clark Fork River bank at Milltown State Park near Missoula. Public comments are due by Friday, March 22 at 5pm.

The public is asked to comment on these two issues:

- 1- A biennial rule to extend the closure on the lower Blackfoot for floating and swimming but allow river bank access until July 1, 2015.
 - The lower Blackfoot River poses numerous hazards for river recreation including the interstate 90 bridge piers and the remnants of the Bonner Dam. Until an appropriate hazard removal and risk management plan/strategy is developed by FWP and other state partners, the Parks Division recommends that this reach of the Blackfoot River remain closed while progress is made.
- 2- A biennial rule to continue the closure of the river bank on the Clark Fork River to public access, with the exception of gravel bars, while opening the river to floating and swimming on May 1, 2013.
 - On the Clark Fork River, restoration work is complete and project managers with the Natural Resource Damage Program believe the closure of the river to floating and swimming is no longer necessary. It is recommended, however, that floater access to the floodplain be restricted to gravel bars along the river, and not allowed on the river bank until such time that newly planted vegetation is better established.

Background: Cleanup and restoration of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers associated with the Milltown Dam Superfund site was completed in the summer of 2012. The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) Commission authorized the closure of short stretches of the two rivers for roughly five years. In 2011, the Commission extended the closure on the two rivers for two more years. At the February 14, 2013 meeting, the FWP Commission supported these river closure extensions.

Public comments will be accepted for 30 days starting Wednesday, February 20 through **Friday, March 22 at 5pm.**

There are two ways the public can provide comments:

- Online at stateparks.mt.gov click on “public notices” on the right-hand navigation bar
- Send written comments by mail to:
Blackfoot/Clark Fork Comments
c/o Montana State Parks
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Note: All information provided with a comment becomes part of a public record.

Milltown State Park, located near Missoula, has an anticipated opening in 2014. The overlook is open now. It features more than 500 acres of terrain, ranging from restored river bottoms to a pine forested bluff overlooking the confluence. The park will offer visitors a place to go hiking, biking, fishing, floating and watching for birds and wildlife. The park will include trails, picnic shelters and river access points. For more information visit stateparks.mt.gov

Visit Montana State Parks (stateparks.mt.gov) and enjoy camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, boating and more and discover some of the greatest natural and cultural treasures on earth.

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