

MEETING NOTES

MEETING DATES: APRIL 21, 2015 & APRIL 22, 2015
PROJECT NAME: HELL CREEEK STATE PARK MASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN
PROJECT NUMBER: 14075
MEETING PURPOSE: SOLICITATION OF IDEAS AND FEEDBACK

Question #1: When you visit Hell Creek State Park, describe your typical experience.

Visitor Demographics	Visitor Length of Stay/Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring 5th wheel, camper, pickup • 2-6 in party • 10+ in party • Socializing • Relaxing • Family bonding • Bring: campers, pickups, boats, tents • Brings: boats, ATVs, "GENSET", TIP-UPS, wall tents • Has pickup and boat x2 and x3 people • Small groups • Cabin owners (x 3) • Visiting friends (groups of 6-15) • Cabin owners (x8); 1 outfitter • Vehicle, camper, boat, ATV • 3-4 vehicles • Dogs • Day users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-day stay • Go 8-10 weekends per summer • Get away from crowds • Go multiple days all summer long • Pre-planned trips • Place to stay – lodging hotel/cabin – plan far ahead • Use primitive camping • Reservation system problems – no shows/open sites • Long weekend, 2 weeks • Goes regardless of if they can make a reservation • 3-4 week-long tips per summer are common • Difficult to reserve a campsite • Pass through [the park] • Impulse use – no reservations • Some reservations – issues with reservation system • Reevaluation of interactive website – ORMS

Concessionaire as an Added Value	Fish, Wildlife & Natural Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Clint for boat maintenance, supplies, bait, ice, air compressor, lake happenings [information] • Concessionaire services provided are essential: Long-term lease for concessionaire, Marina is more important than campground, Provides a safe environment • Concession • Concessionaire contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit for fishing • Fishing • Boating • Hunting • Primarily [go for] boat fishing • Wildlife is important • Fishing/hunting experience • Great experience even if you don't catch a fish • Fish/hunt/shore fishing • [Fishing] tournament • Destination park • Fishing
Fish Cleaning Station	Access Road
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning station • Fish cleaning station • Fish cleaning station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pave the road • Washboard road is a deterrent to come • Won't go as often because of the road • Solving road problems will create new problems with too many people • Cancelled campsites due to road • Accessibility is the biggest issue • Endurance to get there • Road (x 1M + 1)
Comfort Station	Restaurant/Groceries/Bait/Gas/Repair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At marina, use: gas, ice • Boat repair (not lose the whole vacation) • Groceries • Bait • Repair (x 1M)
Shade/Structures	Boat Ramps/Parking/Internal Access/Docks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shade • Shelters (x2) – meetings for cabin owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boat ramps • Traffic noise/dust in AM for boat launch • Boat Ramps
Camping/Campsites/Motel/Cabin	Administration & Visitor Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camping • Motel • Cabin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with park staff • Signage • Human relations management

Dry Dock/Storage	Children Services/Playgrounds/Alternative Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No place to store or place boat • Storage facility always full • Can't leave boat until their next visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground • Playground is limited to young kids • Horse use would be more if advertised • Water sports

Question #2: What do you most appreciate about the park? What would you like to see retained into the future?

Comfort Station	Fish Cleaning Station
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showers! • Flush toilets • Good shower house – could be bigger • Extended shower facilities • Showers (x 3) • Restrooms • Showers • Flush toilets • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish cleaning station • Fish cleaning station (x 2) • Fish cleaning station
Restaurant/Groceries/Bait/Gas/Repair	Boat Ramps/Parking/Internal Access/Docks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bait • Gas • bait, maintenance • Boat/vehicle repairs • Store/marina • Bait • Fuel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramps • Boat ramps • Boat ramps • Parking
Administration & Visitor Service	Camping/Campsites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, respectful environment • Cleanliness • Availability of park staff • Year-round access • Customer service • Cleanliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrified Campsites • Electric sites • RV hookups • Ability to charge trolling motors • Electricity • Electric hookups

Access Road	Concessionaire as an Added Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gravel roads • They used to go to the park more often back in time when the road was maintained better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clint & Deb can fix it • Concessionaire marina & services • All of concessionaire's services, including: fuel & customer service • Safety-rescue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessions • Concessionaire (x 10)
Water, Sewer & Garbage	Dry Dock/Storage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dump station & potable water • Water • Garbage service • Sharing water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry-docks • Need more storage facilities • Storage • Dry-docks
Children Services/Playgrounds/Alternative Activities	Fish, Wildlife & Natural Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground equipment • Playground • Playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Walleyes Unlimited chapter • Beautiful body of water • Lake/water • Fish
Shade/Structures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter building • Shelter building 	

Question #3: What additional services or site amenities would be beneficial to enhancing the visitor experience at the park?

Comfort Station	Fish Cleaning Station
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shower curtains • Larger shower buildings • Additional restrooms • Extended comfort station season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional capacity at fish cleaning station • Extend season and enlarge fish cleaning station
Restaurant/Groceries/Bait/Gas/Repair	Boat Ramps/Parking/Internal Access/Docks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed marina building/grocery/restaurant/store • Restaurant by concessionaire • Restaurant/bar/hotel (x 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtesy docks • More boat trailer parking • More parking by main ramp • Double ramp at marina • Increased access/all-weather access to ramp • More slips for boats • Docks available to those staying at Hell Creek • Expanded boat ramp + marina • Expanded parking
Administration & Visitor Services	Camping/Campsites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for peak demand • Less red tape to enable development • Longer concessionaire lease • Long term lease for concessionaire • Additional land development • Bid operations & maintenance • Longer concessionaire contract • Fewer FEDS bothering you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group camping with electric (x 3) • Better use of space in campgrounds • Wider campsites • Paved campsites • Full hookups at campsites • Campsites & electric sites • RV hookups in concessionaire control • More electric sites • RV-hookups by concessionaire (x 10)
Access Road	Concessionaire as an Added Value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More gravel [on roads] • Better road • Speed limit signs on primary road • New road or better maintained road • Could improving the road cause additional problems for the park? • [better] road conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private owned campsites/concession • Allow concession to expand facilities • Concessionaire hookups • Increased concessionaire services, including: long-term camping and dry-dock expansion with electricity

Water, Sewer & Garbage	Dry Dock/Storage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger water system to handle peak demand • Share water with cabin owners • Potable water year round 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More dry dock storage • Additional dry dock storage • Need plug in sites for boats
Children Services/Playgrounds/Alternative Activities	Telecommunications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids activities • Dances • Music or other entertainment • Basketball court • Playground for older kids • FOLF (Frisbee/disc golf) course • Dog care • Golf course • Golf cart rentals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cell service
Visitor Length of Stay/Planning	Accessibility/Trails/OHV/Equine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change regulations – more than 1 camper per site, tents on grass • Extended state camping limit (currently 14 days) • Modifying reservation policy • More first-come-first-serve sites • Longer stay periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to lakeshore during various water levels • ATV trails • Universally accessible • Handicap accessible sites down to water • Motorized/OHV (off-highway vehicle) trails • Bike trails
Shelters/Shade	Swimming Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More shade shelters • Shade trees • Expand day-use building • Amphitheatre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming area that is designated with buoys • Dedicated swimming area • Expanded no-wake zone • Better swim/fish dock

Question #4: With limited fiscal, human & infrastructure resources prioritize improvements or management strategies derived from answers given in questions 2 and 3.

	Important	Less Important
Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More dry dock space • More electric & non-electric campsites • Redo septic system to handle 4th of July • Space utilization • County road • Campsites by concessionaire • Change county rd. to state rd. • Longer concessionaire lease • Streamline red-tape processes • Modify reservation system • Boat ramp parking • Additional campsites by concessionaire • Don't jeopardize concessionaire's lease & ability to provide • More campsites • Extended stay periods • Fuel • Restaurant • Cell tower • Better road • Gravel marina ramp/better low-water access • Improved roads • If road doesn't get approved, the park needs more storage • More electric sites • Additional boat docks • Road • Restaurant • Concessionaire lease • Bid Operations & maintenance • Access mowed lawn/water • Boat ramps/parking • Concessionaire RV hookups • Year-round restrooms • Longer concessionaire contract • Road/dust control • Marina building • Boat ramps • Long-term camping • Reservation confusion [solution] • RV hookups by concessionaire • Dry-docks expansion • Hotel rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More showers • More shade • Continue gas & bait sales • County roads • Gravel of boat ramps & parking areas • Courtesy dock at main ramp • Enlarge fish cleaning station • Extended shower house season • Restaurant • Better kid's fishing & swim dock • Basketball court

	Important	Less Important
Less Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination/communication with Jordan merchants • Expansion of fish cleaning station • Group campsites • Additional fish cleaning station • FOLF course • Golf course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend main boat ramp • Shower curtains • Children’s activities • Day-use building • Trails • State expansion • Dog Kennel • Laundry service

Question #5: What additional information would you like Montana State Parks to consider as they develop this plan?

Concessionaire as an Added Value	Administration & Visitor Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessionaire’s needs • Autonomy for private concessionaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with locals • Correlation of improvements with visitation • Changes in public relations at park • Education v. enforcement • Warnings v. citations • More user input & utilize user input • Outside bid for operations & maintenance • Replace State Parks • Additional recreation areas on lake (within the Park – not other recreation areas) • Appreciate investment • Maintain what we have • Be creative in execution • Evaluate capability • More transparency • More public participation • Upfront, honest, & transparent communication [with visitors/users] • ACOE fix cabin foundations! • Likes it just as it is • All events & notices put on a calendar on the websites

Access Road	Boat Ramps/Parking/Internal Access/Docks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **COUNTY ROAD MAINTENANCE** (MgCI!) • State road maintenance • What can be done with road? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the park grows in numbers, they may need another boat ramp • They felt limited at the campground boat ramp and boy scout boat ramp because they are the only docks • Boy Scout ramp is the protected from the wind and steeper so you don't have to go out too far with a vehicle • Breakwater
Water, Sewer & Garbage	Comfort Station
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garbage service for cabin owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More showers & flush toilets
Accessibility/Trails/OHV/Equine	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking paths 	

Comment Cards and Other Alternative Feedback Venues

1. Activity level experiences wide swings, from low to very high. It is very frustrating for people to be there during periods of high volume use and the facilities can't handle the demands. Better to be prepared for high volume periods than to try and establish an average knowing it will be inadequate during high volume usage.
2. Move the kids dock to a better location. Away from the weeds and to deeper water. Kids do not use it at the current location.
3. Want more privatized (concessionaire) run hotels, marina, RVs, restaurant, everything in general – they have to make money or go broke so there is better service such as saving people in night, mechanic work, bait, store – need longer 40 year contract in this so they can get banker to go with them.
4. I think it is important to keep in mind that return visitors of the park enjoy their experience because of the dedication and services of Clint & Deb. Speaking from experience, I don't choose to travel to Hell Creek because you have nice bathrooms or campgrounds, I chose to travel down a crappy road because I know while I am there, I can depend on the Thomas family to help if I'm in a bind or for their services to add to the enjoyment of the trip. I think it is safe to say that without them and the services they provide, Hell Creek wouldn't be worth going to anymore.
5. Better on shore fishing access, not everybody has a boat to fish in.
6. Take care of what each have now. More camping down by water's edge, fire pits, and tables.
The Road –

Maybe try and add concessionaire a little competition would maybe help come up with a bigger marina & restaurant.

Hell Creek State is one of the best places in Eastern Montana. Very Proud of it.

7. Consider economic impact of additional services at Hell Creek as the addition may negatively affect merchants in Jordan.
8. At Hell Creek campground it would be a great improvement to expand the parking area and the boat ramp at Boy Scout Point. This ramp offers more protection from the wind and more and more boaters are using this ramp.
9. Also at Hell Creek, dust from the main road inside the park is a major problem.
10. At Fort Peck in general another campground with electric hookups and boat ramp in the dam area would relieve some of the pressure from Hell Creek.

The above listed notes were transcribed by **Peaks to Plains Design, P.C.** of the contents of the meeting. Please advise the preparer, in writing, of any errors or omissions.