

# Big Hole River Drought Management Plan

Version 2026

Protecting the Big Hole River fishery during drought with voluntary conservation & state enforced fishing restrictions



**BIG HOLE**  
**WATERSHED COMMITTEE**  
*Conservation Through Consensus.*

*Shared Sacrifice, Shared Success*

# About the Big Hole River Drought Management Plan

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The Big Hole River Drought Management Plan (DMP) coordinates conservation measures during periods of drought to protect the fishery. The plan sets flow and water temperature targets on the mainstem Big Hole River, which is divided into five river sections supported by a network of Real-time USGS and DNRC measurement stations (gages). In a drought year, the plan begins with voluntary conservation measures by river users, particularly irrigators. The model promotes working together voluntarily to prevent stress on fish during drought.

When conditions worsen beyond voluntary conservation targets, state-managed fishing restrictions are implemented and enforced by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Fishing restrictions can be triggered by high water temperatures, low streamflows, or both. Re-opening criteria vary by river section and can be found in the DMP.

The DMP was created in 1997 by the Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC) and its many technical advisors and partners. It is implemented in partnership between the BHWC, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP). The DMP is reviewed annually and updated as needed by the Big Hole River Drought Subcommittee, a team of conservationists, irrigators, sportsmen, and agency personnel coordinated by BHWC.

# River Conditions and Drought Management Plan Information

Visit <https://bhwc.org/river-conditions>

(or scan the QR code to right with your phone's camera).

- Real-time Big Hole River conditions
- Map of Drought Management Plan sections and current status by section
- Drought Management Plan documents
- Stream Flow and Snowpack Forecasts



## Get Updates by E-Mail

Visit [bhwc.org](https://bhwc.org) to [sign up for email updates](#).

Request sign-up by email at [info@bhwc.org](mailto:info@bhwc.org).

Text 'DROUGHT' to 26989 and register to receive weekly drought updates.

## Contact BHWC

Big Hole Watershed Committee

P.O. Box 21, Divide, Montana 59727

406-960-4855 [info@bhwc.org](mailto:info@bhwc.org)



Big Hole River Drought Management Plan

Shared Sacrifice, Shared Success



# BIG HOLE RIVER DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN VERSION 2026 QUICK REFERENCE

SECTION	FLOW TRIGGERS, APR 1 – OCT 31	TEMPERATURE TRIGGERS
I: Saginaw Bridge on Skinner Meadows Road to North Fork Big Hole River mouth	160 cfs - April 1 to June 30 target for Arctic grayling spawning. 60 cfs – Prepare for Conservation 40 cfs – Conservation 20 cfs – MFWP River Closure <a href="#">Measured at USGS Wisdom Gage (06024450)</a>	<p><b>Step 1:</b> <b>MFWP Hoot-Owl Fishing Restrictions:</b> Hoot-owl fishing restriction will be in place when daily maximum water temperature reaches or exceeds 73° F (23° C) for at least some period of time during three consecutive days. Hoot-owl fishing closure prohibits fishing between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. (Midnight). They will remain in place until re-opening criteria are met.</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> <b>MFWP River Closure Due to High Temperatures:</b> River closure based on water temperature may be implemented if hoot-owl restrictions are inadequate to protect the fishery (e.g., prolonged period where water temperatures exceed 73° F and forecasts are not favorable for cooler temperature, thermal stress in fish observed by biologist, etc.). Closure will remain in place until re-opening criteria are met. <i>Section temperature measured at flow gages (left).</i></p> <p><a href="#">Current Waterbody Restrictions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Current Fishing Regulations</a></p>
II: North Fork Big Hole River mouth to Dickie Bridge	450 cfs - April 1 to June 30 target for Arctic grayling spawning. 170 cfs – Prepare for Conservation 140 cfs – Conservation 100 cfs – MFWP River Closure <a href="#">Measured at DNRC Big Hole River near Wise River Gage (41D 08000)</a>	
III: Dickie Bridge to MFWP Maiden Rock FAS	250 cfs – Prepare for Conservation 200 cfs – Conservation 150 cfs – MFWP River Closure* <a href="#">Measured at USGS Maiden Rock Gage (06025250)</a>	
IV: MFWP Maiden Rock FAS to Tony Schoonen FAS	250 cfs – Prepare for Conservation 200 cfs – Conservation 150 cfs – MFWP River Closure* <a href="#">Measured at LOWEST of USGS Glen Gage (06026210) or Melrose Gage (0602550)</a>	
V: Tony Schoonen FAS to confluence with Jefferson River	200 cfs – Prepare for Conservation 150 cfs – Conservation 100 cfs – MFWP River Closure <a href="#">Measured at USGS Big Hole River below Hamilton Ditch near Twin Bridges Gage (06026420)</a>	

\*Section III will close to fishing when Section IV reaches closure criteria for streamflow OR water temperature AND trout populations are below objective (below 25<sup>th</sup> percentile as determined by MFWP).

Contact: [info@bhwc.org](mailto:info@bhwc.org);  
406-960-4855

## VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR ANGLERS DURING PERIODS OF DROUGHT AND SPAWNING

The following are voluntary actions anglers can take to protect the Big Hole River fishery during periods of drought:

- ❖ Use a stream thermometer when you fish, available at your local fly shop. Water temperatures change throughout the day with the coldest water occurring in the early morning. Take the temperature frequently throughout the day and when water temperatures rise above 67F, stop fishing.
- ❖ Always keep fish wet and release them quickly.
- ❖ Use heavier tippet and land fish quickly. Prolonged fight times in warm water place a high amount of stress on the fish and increase hooking mortality.
- ❖ Consider exploring high mountain streams and mountain lakes, where water temperatures stay cooler and give the river fish a break.
- ❖ Consider taking a break from fishing during hot weather and find other ways to enjoy the Montana outdoors.

The following are voluntary actions anglers can take to protect the Big Hole River fishery during periods of spawning:

- ❖ Choose to fish elsewhere if you can, or for a different species.
- ❖ Don't walk or fish in areas with clean gravels (redds).
- ❖ Don't use flies, lures, or bait that resemble fish eggs, including glo-bugs, egg flies, florescent colored scuds, or beads.
- ❖ Educate yourself. Learn what a redd (fish nest) looks like and how to avoid them.
- ❖ Use polarized glasses so you can see areas where fish are spawning.
- ❖ Use extra caution when wading through tailouts and shallow riffles, as these are where brown trout spawn, and they are common areas at which to ford the river.

## BIG HOLE RIVER FISHING REGULATIONS

Trout abundances in the Big Hole River have steadily declined since 2011 and are at or near historical lows. Meanwhile, fishing pressure has increased. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted these emergency fishing regulations on June 8, 2023 to be responsive to fish populations in accordance with Montana's draft statewide fisheries management plan.

- ❖ Entire river: Catch-and-release for Arctic grayling
  - Headwaters to Dickie Bridge: Combined trout: five daily and in possession
- ❖ Dickie Bridge to Brownes Bridge: Open April 1 through September 30
  - Catch-and-release only
  - Artificial lures only
- ❖ Brownes Bridge to mouth: Open April 1 through September 30
  - Catch-and-release only

For more information about fishing regulations or waterbody closures, visit [fwp.mt.gov/fish](http://fwp.mt.gov/fish).



# BIG HOLE RIVER DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN VERSION 2026

**BIG HOLE WATERSHED COMMITTEE**

**ADOPTED 1997**

*Amended 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2012, 2012 v2, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026*

BHWC Drought Management Plan Amendments are recorded in a separate document, which can be found at <https://bhwc.org/river-conditions>.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Big Hole River Drought Management Plan (DMP) is to mitigate the most severe effects of low stream flows and high water temperatures for fisheries (particularly fluvial Arctic grayling) through a voluntary effort among agricultural operations, municipalities, businesses, conservation groups, anglers, and affected government agencies.

## OVERVIEW

The Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC) has agreed to this DMP to help mitigate impacts to fish populations during dry years as indicated by flows and temperature. This plan has been designed to consider the interests of all affected parties including ranchers, municipalities, anglers, and conservation groups. It is operated in partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). The BHWC agrees that if the DMP is to be successful, it will need broad-based support and understanding. BHWC members are committed to securing the support of their constituencies for the successful implementation of this plan. This plan is intended to be modified based on the lessons learned from research projects, information reported from river gages, and annual reviews of its implementation by the Big Hole River Drought Subcommittee. The DMP is reviewed annually by the BHWC and modified as needed.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Big Hole Watershed Committee roles:**

- ❖ Educate interested and affected parties.
- ❖ Review and adopt DMP annually and update as needed.
- ❖ Receive, disseminate, and act on information regarding stream conditions and snowpack levels throughout the year.

- ❖ Notify interested and affected parties of implementation and secure support.
- ❖ Evaluate the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the plan.

**Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP), Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), and the United State Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) roles:**

- ❖ Provide accurate, timely information regarding stream conditions and snowpack levels throughout the year.
- ❖ Provide technical assistance in reviewing the plan and monitoring its implementation.
- ❖ Ensure coordination of efforts among all affected government agencies.
- ❖ Provide public notice of MFWP actions for fishing restrictions, closures and re-opening.

## DEFINITION OF DRY YEAR CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The BHWC will monitor snowpack levels and forecasted low stream level information provided by the DNRC, USGS, MFWP, and NRCS throughout the year in order to prepare for potential water conservation measures. Streamflow information gathered from gaging stations will be used to initiate specific voluntary actions to conserve water and mitigate the effects of dry year conditions on fish populations from **April 1 through October 31, unless otherwise noted.**

## DETERMINING PROXIMITY TO FLOW TRIGGERS

Flow trigger levels are based on the Average Daily Flow measured in cubic feet per second (cfs). Therefore, flow will be reviewed the following day to determine low flow trigger levels and fishing closures. Average daily flow is calculated on the USGS real-time streamflow website: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/rt>

## MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS' AUTHORITY AND STATEWIDE DROUGHT CLOSURE POLICY

MFWP has a statewide river closure policy that is referenced in each of the Big Hole River sections described in this document, pursuant to [ARM 12.5.5](#). The [MFWP Statewide Drought Policy, which](#) contains triggers for the Big Hole River in three sections. The BHWC Drought Management Plan provides support and justification for taking more conservative measures than MFWP might take elsewhere and will be followed at MFWP's discretion. **However, it is ultimately MFWP's responsibility and discretion to enact or lift restrictions or closures. BHWC does not have the authority to enact or lift restrictions or closures.** Decisions on MFWP river closures follow the following process:

1. Regional Fisheries staff makes recommendations to MFWP Fish Chief based on the Big Hole DMP criteria.

2. MFWP Fisheries Division gets concurrence from the Regional Supervisor and local Fish and Wildlife Commissioner.
3. Restriction/closure rule is signed by the MFWP Director.
4. River closures or restrictions due to high water temperature are lifted when temperatures meet the re-opening criteria (see page 11). River closures or restrictions due to low streamflow are automatically lifted October 31 or when flows meet the re-opening criteria (whichever comes first).
5. The MFWP Fisheries Division, with support of the Director's Office, is responsible for lifting restrictions or closures.

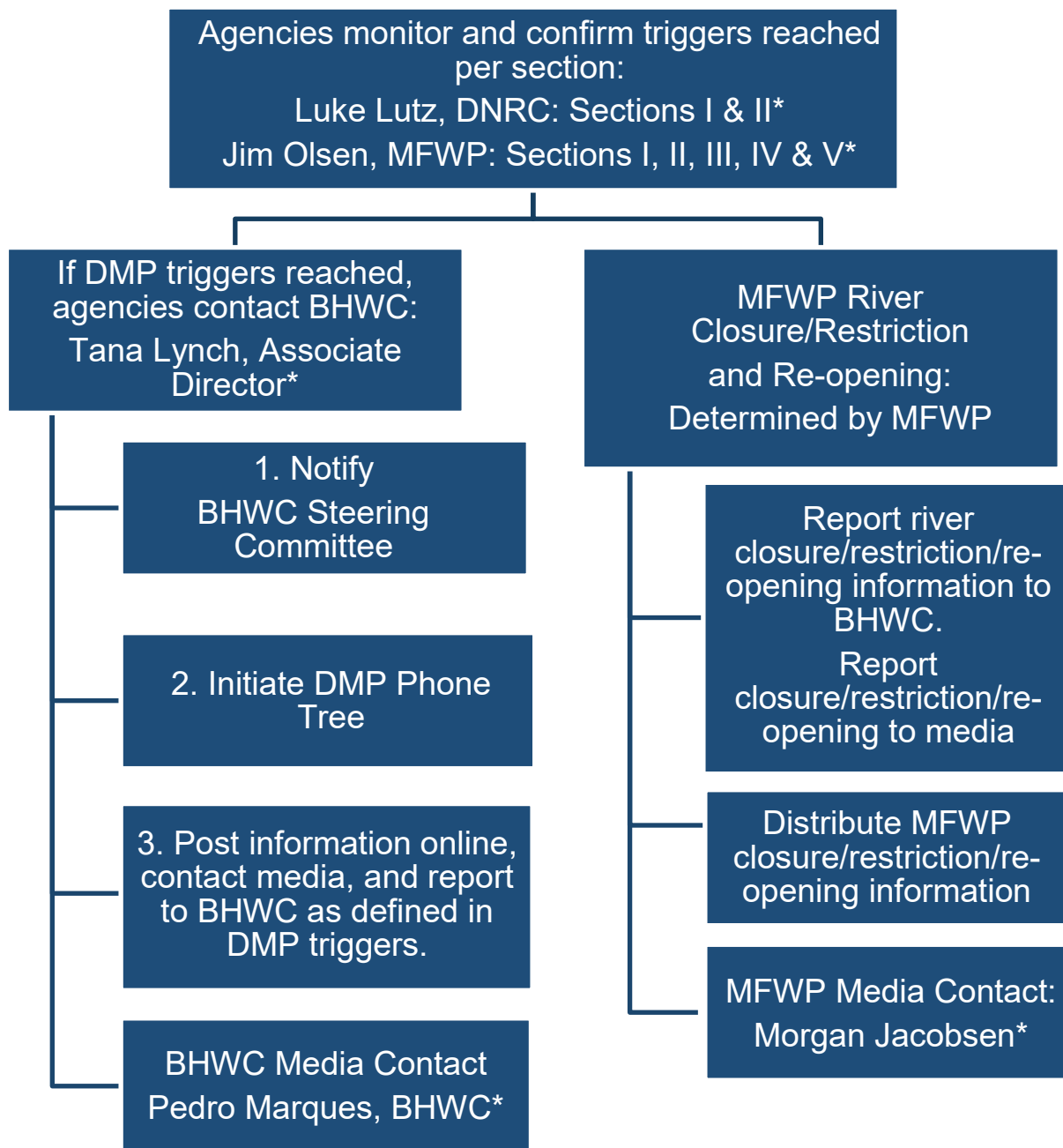
View current MFWP River closures and re-openings statewide:

<https://fwp.mt.gov/news/current-closures-restrictions/waterbody-closures>.

## HIGH WATER TEMPERATURE AND FISH HEALTH

Water temperature above 68 °F is generally considered stressful to salmonids. Warm water temperatures typically occur between July 15 - September 1 in the Big Hole River. Although water temperature above 68 °F can occur before and after this period, cooler night temperatures alleviate long periods of warm daytime temperatures. The upper incipient lethal water temperature (e.g., that temperature that is survivable indefinitely for periods longer than one week by 50% of the population) for Arctic Grayling is 77°F (Loher et. al. 1997). Critical thermal maximum temperature for Arctic grayling is 85°F resulting in instantaneous death.

Thermally-induced stress as observed by trained, experienced observers may include any of the following: observed mortality in significant numbers of Age I and older mountain whitefish and other salmonid species in lieu of other logical sources of mortality; outbreaks of stress related piscid diseases such as Bacterial Furunculosis; extraordinary concentrations of fish in thalweg or riffle tailout habitats; hyperactivity (e.g. gasping, rolling, jumping, etc.) of large, concentrated numbers of fish; and frenzied feeding activity at inappropriate times and under inappropriate conditions.



\* See pages 16-17 for contact information.

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## DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSERVATION STEPS

### FLOW-BASED STEPS: MAY 1 - OCTOBER 31

- Step 1: **Prepare for Conservation:** DNRC and MFWP officials present data and possible options to the Big Hole Watershed Committee, including CCAA implementation, voluntary irrigation reduction, use of stock water diversions and wells, municipal water use, angling. The DMP Phone Tree is initiated to notify water users and outfitters and anglers of low water conditions and encourage conservation measures. Information will be shared on BHWC's website and social media platforms.
- Step 2: **Conservation:** The DMP Phone Tree is initiated to provide notice to outfitters and anglers requesting they voluntarily limit their angling activities to earlier, cooler hours of the day. The DMP Phone Tree will be initiated to contact water users and encourage water conservation. The BHWC will inform the public of low flow conditions. Information will be shared via BHWC's website, social media platforms, and electronic newsletter.
- Step 3: **MFWP River Closure:** MFWP will provide public notice of fishing closures and encourage public conservation efforts. MFWP will provide river closure/re-opening information to BHWC for distribution. The DMP Phone Tree will be initiated to advise water users and outfitters/anglers of river closure and extreme low water conditions and to encourage conservation measures. Information will be shared on BHWC's website and social media platforms as well as MFWP's website.

### TEMPERATURE-BASED STEPS: MAY 1 - OCTOBER 31

- Step 1: **MFWP Hoot-Owl Fishing Restrictions:** Hoot-owl fishing restriction will be implemented when daily maximum water temperature reaches or exceeds 73° F (23° C) for at least some period of time during three consecutive days. Hoot-owl fishing closure prohibits fishing between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. (Midnight). They will remain in place until re-opening criteria are met. MFWP will provide public notice if hoot-owl restrictions are implemented.
- Step 2: **MFWP River Closure Due to High Temperatures:** River closure based on water temperature will be implemented if hoot-owl restrictions are inadequate to protect the fishery (e.g., prolonged period where water temperatures exceed 73° F and forecasts are not favorable for cooler temperature, thermal stress in fish observed by biologist, etc.). River closure will remain in place until re-opening criteria have been met. MFWP will provide public notice if a river closure is implemented.

## MFWP FLOW-BASED RE-OPENING CRITERIA

Sections with flow-based closures will be re-opened when average daily flow at the measurement gage is greater than the “Conservation” target for that section\* for 7 consecutive days AND water temperatures are less than 70° F for 3 consecutive days.

However, MFWP may reopen the fishery in Sections 3-5 before reopening criteria have been reached if ALL of the following conditions have been met:

- the trout population in the Big Hole is below objective (below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, yellow or red in the management plan) as determined in spring population counts by MFWP, resulting in a fall fishing closure;
- water temperatures have not exceeded 65° F for seven consecutive days;
- streamflows are at or above 200 cfs;
- the forecast is for these conditions to continue.

MFWP will determine re-opening and will provide public notice. BHWC will share re-opening announcements.

\*Note: In Section V, reopening criteria is set at the section’s “Prepare for Conservation” target of 200 cfs.

Unique to Section I and II of the Big Hole River is the implementation of the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for Arctic grayling restoration. While this program is in place, DNRC and MFWP will be responsible for contacting water users to engage in water conservation measures in response to the flow triggers specified for this reach. All other facets of this plan, including contacting outfitters, sportsmen, and the media, will be implemented as described below. For more information on the CCAA visit [https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/es/species/fish/grayling/CCAA\\_June2006.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/es/species/fish/grayling/CCAA_June2006.pdf).

## SECTION I: SAGINAW BRIDGE ON SKINNER MEADOWS ROAD TO MOUTH OF THE NORTH FORK OF THE BIG HOLE RIVER

### SECTION I FLOW TARGETS: APRIL 1 - OCTOBER 31

Monitored at the [USGS Wisdom Gage: "Big Hole River bl Big Lake Cr at Wisdom", Number 06024450](#)

160 cfs      *April 1 - June 30.* Water users with CCAA site plans will be required to implement their plans. Non-CCAA water users will be contacted by DNRC and MFWP, advised of flow conditions and encouraged to implement conservation measures. This target is specific to the CCAA goal of maintaining spawning and rearing flow requirements for Arctic grayling.

July 1 – October 31

60 cfs      **Prepare for Conservation**

40 cfs      **Conservation**

20 cfs      **MFWP River Closure**

**Re-opening criteria:** 40 cfs for 7 consecutive days AND water temperatures less than 70° F for 3 consecutive days.

## NOTES

The wetted stream perimeter (i.e., flow below which standing crops of fish decrease) in Section I of the Big Hole River is 60 cfs (DNRC 1992). While this flow may be reasonable to maintain in ample moisture years and should be the goal for flow preservation efforts, in most years it is not a realistic quantity. Fish population and flow data indicate 40 cfs is feasible to maintain while still sufficient to protect the Arctic grayling population. A minimum survival flow of 20 cfs will provide flows necessary to maintain a wetted channel, provide connectivity to thermal or flow refugia habitats, and ensure survival of the grayling population during brief, critical periods.

## SECTION II: MOUTH OF THE NORTH FORK OF THE BIG HOLE RIVER TO DICKIE (DICKEY) BRIDGE

### SECTION II FLOW TARGETS: APRIL 1 - OCTOBER 31

Monitored at [DNRC Dickie Bridge Gage: "Big Hole River near Wise River", Number 41D 08000](#)

450 cfs      *April 1 - June 30. Water users with CCAA site plans will be required to implement their plans. Non-CCAA water users will be contacted by DNRC and MFWP, advised of flow conditions and encouraged to implement conservation measures. This target is specific to the CCAA goal of maintaining spawning and rearing flow requirements for Arctic grayling.*

July 1 - October 31

170 cfs      **Prepare for Conservation**

140 cfs      **Conservation**

100 cfs      **MFWP River Closure**

**Re-opening criteria:** 140 cfs for 7 consecutive days and water temperatures less than 70° F for 3 consecutive days.

## SECTION III: DICKIE BRIDGE TO MFWP MAIDEN ROCK FISHING ACCESS SITE

### FLOW TARGETS: MAY 1 - OCTOBER 31

Monitored at [USGS Maiden Rock Gage: "Big Hole River at Maiden Rock nr Divide", Number 06025250](#)

250 cfs      **Prepare for Conservation**

200 cfs      **Conservation**

150 cfs      **MFWP River Closure\***

**Re-opening criteria:** 200 cfs for 7 consecutive days and water temperatures less than 70° F for 3 consecutive days.

*\*Note: Section III will close to fishing when Section IV reaches closure criteria for flow OR temperature AND populations are below objective (below the 25th percentile, yellow or red in*

the management plan) as determined by population estimates conducted by MFWP each spring.

## SECTION IV: MFWP MAIDEN ROCK\* FISHING ACCESS SITE TO MFWP TONY SCHOONEN FISHING ACCESS SITE

### FLOW TARGETS: MAY 1 - OCTOBER 31

Monitored at Lowest reading of [USGS Glen Gage: "Big Hole River near Glen", Number 06026210](#) or [USGS Melrose Gage: "Big Hole River near Melrose, MT", Number 06025500](#)

250 cfs	<b>Prepare for Conservation</b>
200 cfs	<b>Conservation</b>
150 cfs	<b>MFWP River Closure**</b>

**Re-opening criteria:** 200 cfs for 7 consecutive days AND water temperatures less than 70° F for 3 consecutive days.

\*Note: Section IV begins at the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Maiden Rock ("Maidenrock") Fishing Access Site also known as "the Dead Zone", not the Bureau of Land Management Maiden Rock Fishing Access Sites.

## SECTION V: TONY SCHOONEN FISHING ACCESS SITE TO CONFLUENCE OF THE BIG HOLE RIVER WITH THE JEFFERSON RIVER

### FLOW TARGETS: MAY 1 - OCTOBER 31

Monitored at [USGS "Big Hole R bl Hamilton Ditch nr Twin Bridges", Number 06026420](#)

200 cfs	<b>Prepare for Conservation</b>
150 cfs	<b>Conservation</b>
100 cfs	<b>MFWP River Closure</b>

**Re-opening criteria:** 200 cfs for 7 consecutive days AND water temperatures less than 70° F for 3 consecutive days.

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## MONITORING AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

### **MFWP and DNRC Responsibilities**

- ❖ In river sections 1 and 2, MFWP and DNRC are responsible for monitoring streamflows and water temperatures among CCAA-enrolled landowners, and for initiating conservation actions when triggers are met, and in accordance with site specific management plans.
- ❖ DNRC will provide a precipitation and streamflow report at each of BHWC's 9 monthly meetings (3rd Wednesday except July, December, January). Reports will provide up-to-date information and forecasting for snowpack, climate, water temperature, and flows.
- ❖ MFWP will monitor stream gages and make timely public notification, via press release, of fishing closures due to temperature or flow triggers. MFWP will also post public signage of closures at fishing access sites, and remove the signage upon re-opening.
- ❖ As water quality trends decline, DNRC and MFWP will make efforts to communicate early with BHWC about impending closures.

### **Big Hole Watershed Committee Responsibilities**

- ❖ **Big Hole River Drought Subcommittee:** BHWC will coordinate the Big Hole River Drought Subcommittee, tasked with stewarding the Drought Management Plan and approving it on an annual basis.
- ❖ **Payment for gages:** BHWC believes stream gage infrastructure is a critical service and those of the Big Hole should be funded by federal and state budgets. In the absence of such funds, BHWC will secure funding to support the annual operation and maintenance of the Big Hole River's stream gage network.
- ❖ **Communications:**
  - **Monthly: Streamflow/precipitation reports.** BHWC will maintain a standing agenda item at each Big Hole Watershed Committee monthly meeting for a precipitation and streamflow report by the DNRC. These reports will include notification of impending dry year conditions. These reports will be published in monthly meeting minutes.
  - **Weekly: Notifications of Conditions.** During the water year (April – October), the BHWC will provide weekly updates via email, social media, website, and text message regarding water supply and river conditions.
  - **Periodic: Trigger-based or other Notifications.** When flow or temperature triggers are reached, or impending conditions dictate, BHWC will use its communication platforms to inform ranchers, municipalities, outfitters, and conservation and sportsmen groups and the general public.
    - Spring flow conditions may also trigger notifications as they relate to sediment movement, or spawning habitat for spring and early summer spawners.

- At its discretion, BHWC will issue press releases and will work with local media outlets (e.g., Montana Standard, Dillon Tribune, KXLF/KBZK, etc.) to provide context for Drought Management updates.
- Information will also be provided to the general public about actions people can take to mitigate damage from drought years including, but not limited to:
  - Voluntary reduction of irrigation and diversion stock watering during critical times;
  - Water conservation policies by municipalities and industries during sensitive times;
  - Emergency water reduction policies by municipalities and industries during critical times;
  - Reduced recreation uses during sensitive times;
  - Elimination of fall recreation uses at critical times; and
  - Encourage Big Hole watershed residents and Butte rate payers to reduce unnecessary water use including lawn watering, small irrigation systems, washing, etc.
- When significant changes to the Drought Management Plan are made, the BHWC will issue an update in the form of a mailing (hard copy and electronic) that will include: a copy of the most recent Drought Management Plan, flow forecasting, updates on water conservation programs and assistance, and other related news items.
  - The BHWC will hold space at open public meetings to conduct discussions with all parties, as needed, concerning the Drought Management Plan and its implementation.

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## RESOURCES

### INFORMATION CONTACTS

#### Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC)

Dean Peterson, BHWC Board Chair: 406-660-2366; [deanbpeterson@gmail.com](mailto:deanbpeterson@gmail.com)

Pedro Marques, BHWC Executive Director/DMP Contact: 406-552-2369; [pmarques@bhwc.org](mailto:pmarques@bhwc.org)

Tana Lynch, BHWC Associate Director: 208-830-8920; [tlynch@bhwc.org](mailto:tlynch@bhwc.org)

#### Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP)

Jim Olsen, Big Hole River Fisheries Biologist: 406-533-8451; [jimolsen@mt.gov](mailto:jimolsen@mt.gov)

Katelin Killoy, Riparian Ecologist for the Arctic Grayling CCAA Program: 406-596-1999; [katelin.killoy@mt.gov](mailto:katelin.killoy@mt.gov)

Luke Lutz, Big Hole River Hydrologist, CCAA Programs: 406-830-1678;  
[luke.lutz2@mt.gov](mailto:luke.lutz2@mt.gov)

Morgan Jacobsen, Media Contact: 406-577-7891; [morgan.jacobsen@mt.gov](mailto:morgan.jacobsen@mt.gov)

## RESOURCES

Montana State Library Current Drought Conditions:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/76204aa1271a4a7f8a775fc2bba9ef83>

USGS Real-Time Flow Data – Current Conditions, Montana:

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/mt/nwis/current?type=flow>

DNRC Stream and Gage Explorer (StAGE): <https://gis.dnrc.mt.gov/apps/stage/>

NRCS Snowpack Monitoring: <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/snow/>

Montana Bureau of Mines SWAMP Gage List (Wise River Gages):

<http://data.mbm.mtech.edu/swamp/reports/GageList.asp>

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Current Waterbody Restrictions: <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/current-closures-restrictions/waterbody-closures>

Fisheries, Water, and Drought Management:

<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/fisheries-management/water-management/drought>

Montana Natural Resource Information System (NRIS): <https://nris.msl.mt.gov/>

Big Hole Watershed Committee: <https://bhwc.org/>

Real-time Big Hole River Conditions: <https://bhwc.org/river-conditions>

Big Hole Conservation Fund: <https://bhwc.org/conservation-fund>

BHWC Drought Management Plan Phone Tree (DMP Phone Tree): The DMP Phone Tree is a separate document that lists the phone contacts made when DMP triggers are reached. It is used by phone tree leaders.

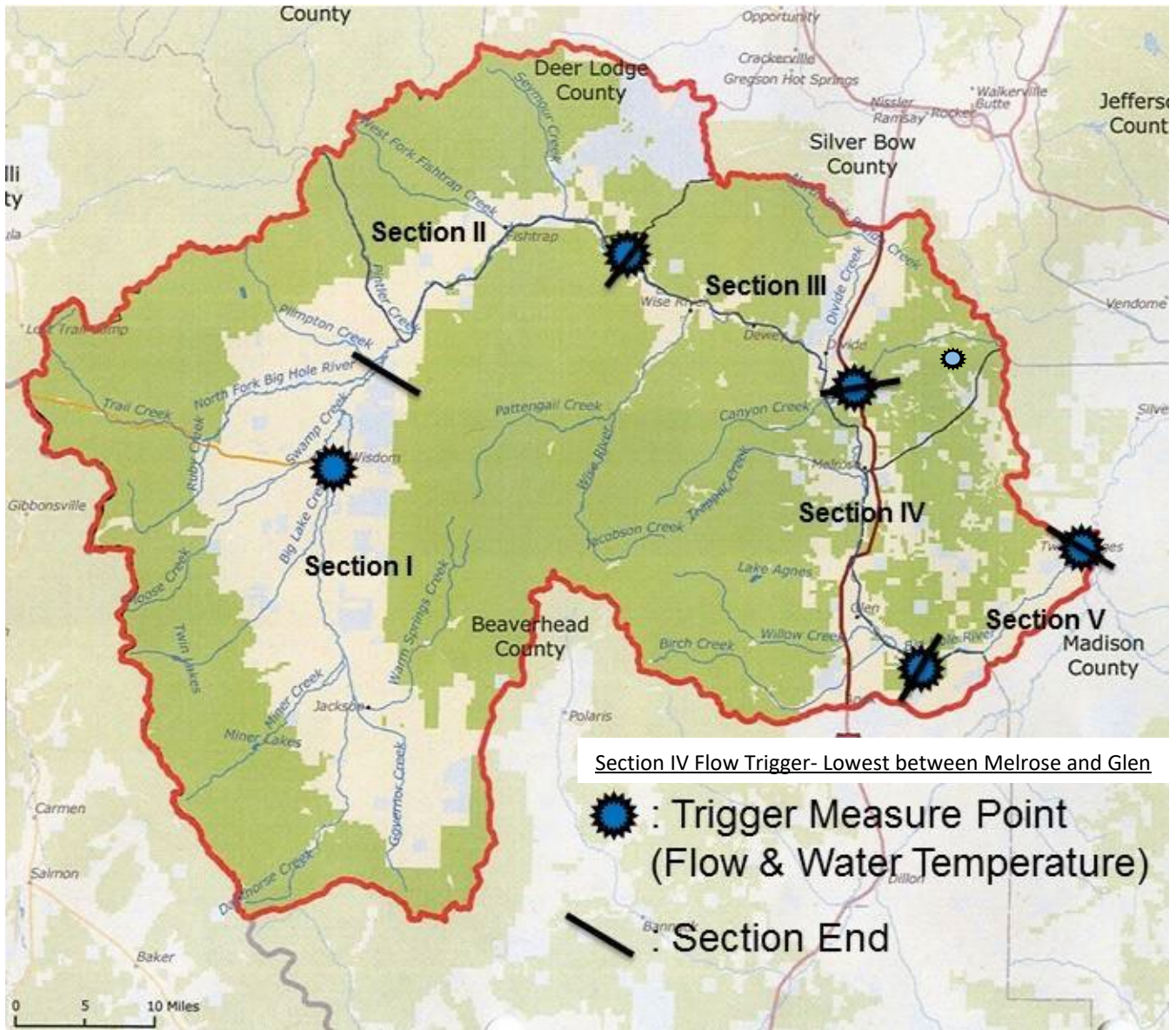
BHWC Drought Management Plan Amendments: The DMP is reviewed annually. When changes are made to the plan, they are recorded in the amendments with reasoning for the change. The amendments are provided in a separate document.



**BIG HOLE**  
WATERSHED COMMITTEE

## Big Hole River Drought Management Plan 2026

### MAP OF RIVER SECTIONS AND MEASUREMENT POINTS



The Big Hole Watershed is outlined in red. River sections are marked as Sections I-V. The Big Hole River originates in Section I and flows downstream to Section V.