

## SAFETY TIPS

Be aware of sudden storms with high winds, rain and lightning that can occur on Flathead Lake. Do not allow children to climb or throw objects from cliffs. Never leave children unattended near water. Due to possible underwater hazards and sharp objects, we recommend that foot protection be worn while swimming and that diving not be attempted. If you have been drinking alcoholic beverages, please do not operate a vehicle or boat. Please report any accidents or hazards to the park staff immediately.

## GETTING THERE

From Kalispell, go south on US 93 to the western shore of the lake to access West Shore and Big Arm state parks. To access Wayfarers, Yellow Bay and Finley Point, take Montana 35 to Bigfork and the eastern shore of Flathead Lake.

From Missoula, take Interstate 90 west, then US 93 north to Polson. To access Finley Point, Yellow Bay and Wayfarers, head north on Montana 35 up the eastern shore. To access Big Arm and West Shore state parks on the western shore, follow US 93 north.

## WHERE TO STAY

Campgrounds are available at all state parks around Flathead Lake, except Wild Horse Island. Plan to arrive early, as most fill up by 4:00 PM on weekends during July and August. Visitors will find the Flathead Lake state park campgrounds the least crowded during May, June and September. Private RV parks and motels are located in Kalispell, Lakeside, Polson, Bigfork and along the lake shore.

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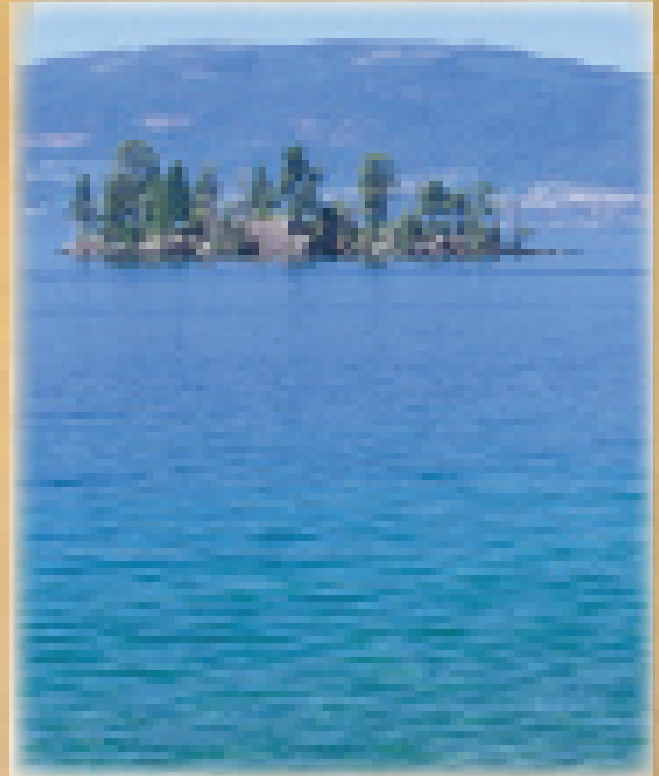
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## INFORMATION

Call, write or e-mail:  
Montana State Parks  
490 N. Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
406-752-5501  
[fwpprk@mt.gov](mailto:fwpprk@mt.gov)  
[www.fvp.mt.gov](http://www.fvp.mt.gov)  
TDD: 406-444-1200

# STATE PARKS OF FLATHEAD LAKE



Scenic Flathead Lake is located between Kalispell and Polson on Highways 93 and 35. Renowned for boating, sailing, fishing, camping and swimming, 6 state parks provide public access to recreational opportunities on the lake.

The largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi with 128 miles of shoreline, Flathead Lake was carved by receding glaciers 10,000 years ago. The lake is 28 miles long and from 5 to 15 miles wide. Covering 188 square miles at an elevation of 2,892 feet, the lake's maximum depth is 386 feet.



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# FACILITIES AND SERVICES

## **Campgrounds**

There are five state park campgrounds with a total of 129 campsites. Each site has a picnic table and fire grate. Some sites will accommodate camping units up to 40 feet long. A RV dump station is located at Wayfarers State Park. Coin-operated showers can be found at Big Arm and Wayfarers. At Finley Point, all 16 RV sites and 4 of the 16 boat slips have electrical and water hookups. Firewood is for sale at most parks. All individual campsites are on a first-come, first served basis. Maximum stay is 7 days.

## **Group Day Use and Group Camping**

Group picnic and camp shelters are available at Big Arm and Yellow Bay. Wayfarers park offers a group picnic shelter. Group facilities are available on a reservation basis by calling 406-751-4577.

## **Picnicking and Swimming**

All areas, except Wild Horse Island, have picnic facilities near the lakeshore. Swimming is allowed, however no lifeguards are provided at any park. Underwater diving is also popular in the crystal clear waters of the lake. Swimmers and divers should shower or dry off immediately to avoid the “swimmer’s itch” parasite that is common in the shallow waters of the lake in late summer.

## **Fishing and Boating**

Boat ramps are available at all parks. In addition, fixed-keel sailboats can usually be launched at Big Arm and Yellow Bay. Flathead Lake is famous for fishing. Species include lake trout throughout the year; yellow perch during winter and spring in the southern part of the lake; lake whitefish in the summer and fall; and Westslope cutthroat trout, which are catch and release only. Special regulations apply within the Flathead Indian Reservation. Be sure to check the fishing regulations before heading out. Boats and fishing charters may be rented at private marinas in the towns of Polson, Bigfork and Big Arm. Boat sewage dump stations are available at Wayfarers and Finley Point state parks.

## **Marine Trail**

Marine campsites are available at the five land-based state parks. Landing areas are identified from the water by a diamond-shaped sign. Watercraft must be human or wind-powered beachable craft, able to pull out of the water onto the shore at night. Most parks have two campsites, with tent pad, fire ring and table. West Shore has 3 sites; Yellow Bay has one site. Yellow Bay prohibits open fires; camp stoves or charcoal only at this site.

## **Hiking and Bicycling Trails**

Opportunities for hiking and bicycling are available at most state parks around Flathead Lake. There are self-guided interpretive hiking trails at Big Arm, Wild Horse Island and Wayfarers. Bicycles are restricted to roadways and designated trails in all parks. Vehicles, including bikes, are prohibited on Wild Horse Island.

## **Watchable Wildlife**

Songbirds, geese, bald eagles, falcons, ospreys and an occasional black bear can be photographed around the lake. Wild Horse Island is renowned for its wildlife. Commonly seen species include Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mule deer, and wild horses. Deer are frequent visitors at West Shore, while flocks of Canada geese take up summer residency at Big Arm.

## EASTERN SHORE

### Finley Point

Finley Point is a 28-acre secluded park in a mature conifer forest near the south end of Flathead Lake. The park features a 16-slip marina for boats up to 25 feet long and 16 campsites for RVs up to 40 feet long. All RV sites and four boat slips have 30-amp electrical service and water hookups. Boat slips may be rented nightly to moor boats or for an on-board camping experience. The park is fully disabled accessible and has flush toilets. There is also a boat sewage pump-out station. **Summer phone: 406-887-2715**

### Wayfarers

Visitors to this campground enjoy the beach, wildflowers, hiking trails and the best sunsets in the valley! Located near the resort town of Bigfork on the northeast shore of Flathead Lake, this 69-acre park in a mature mixed conifer forest has 30 campsites, including 6 tent only sites. The park has flush toilets, coin showers and a group picnic shelter, as well as trailer and boat sewage dump stations. **Summer phone: 406-837-4196.** *Group picnic facilities are available on a reservation basis by calling 406-751-4577.*

### Yellow Bay

Located in the heart of Montana's famous sweet cherry orchards, this 15-acre natural park includes Yellow Bay Creek and a wide beach. Visitors enjoy swimming, boating, lake trout fishing, and bird watching. The campground has 5 sites, including 4 walk-in tent sites. Flush and vault toilets are available in the park. No open fires allowed at this park – camp stoves or charcoal only. **Winter phone: 406-752-5501.**  
**Summer phone: 406-982-3034.**

## WESTERN SHORE

### Big Arm

This 217-acre park on Big Arm Bay is a popular launching spot to access Wild Horse Island. The campground has 40 campsites including 7 tent sites and rental yurts. The park has disabled accessible flush toilets and coin-operated showers. Hiking on the nature trail, swimming, sunbathing and watching Canada geese are popular activities at Big Arm. **Summer phone: 406-849-5256.** *Group picnic, group camping facilities and yurt rental are available on a reservation basis by calling 406-751-4577.*

### West Shore

West Shore, with its 32 campsites (including 6 tent only sites), is located in a mature pine, fir and larch forest along Flathead Lake. The 129-acre park's glacially-carved rock outcrops give spectacular views of Flathead Lake and the Mission and Swan mountain ranges. Fishing and boating are popular along the rocky shoreline. Facilities include vault toilets, potable water and a boat ramp. **Summer phone: 406-844-3044.**

### Wild Horse Island

One of the largest inland islands in the U.S., this primitive park is noted for its endangered palouse prairie plant species and incredible wildlife. Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mule deer and wild horses, along with songbirds, waterfowl, and bald eagles, make this 2,163-acre island their home. Boat access via Big Arm State Park is popular. Camping and fires are not allowed. A public toilet is available on the island at Skeeko Bay.

## Visitor

### Responsibilities

You are a welcome visitor to the state parks at Flathead Lake. To enhance your enjoyment and to aid us in protecting our state parks, please observe the following rules:

1. Pets, where permitted, must be on a leash.
2. Observe the posted speed limit and keep all vehicles on authorized roads.
3. Campfires are permitted only in established fire rings. Do not leave fires unattended.
4. Discharge of firearms and fireworks are not permitted in the parks.
5. Littering and the disturbance or removal of natural features, objects, or park property is prohibited.
6. Quiet hours are from 10 PM to 7 AM.

If in doubt, ask the park staff

