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Chapter 1  
**Introduction**





## Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 RMP Program and Policy

The Pacific Northwest Region of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is conducting a multi-year program to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for each of its major facilities. This program is guided by Federal legislation and policies to ensure that Federal lands are managed to serve a wide range of public purposes. RMP preparation is specifically authorized in Title 28 of Public Law 102-575. It is also an outcome of *Assessment '87*, a Reclamation study that examined the future direction of its programs. This study established a broad framework for moving forward into the 21st century, with increased emphasis on the improved management of projects and the protection of the environment. Each RMP is intended to provide the management framework needed to balance the development, use, and protection of Reclamation lands and their associated natural, cultural, and recreational resources. It is Reclamation's blueprint for future resource management decisions to guide Reclamation, managing partners, and agency cooperators, as well as inform the public about the resource management policies and actions to be implemented over the life of the RMP.

Reclamation's resource management policy is to provide a broad level of stewardship to ensure and encourage resource protection, conservation, and multiple use, as appropriate. Management practices and principles established in

this RMP, in accordance with existing Federal laws, regulations, and policies, provide for the protection of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources; cultural resources; public health and safety; and applicable uses of Reclamation lands and water areas, public access, and outdoor recreation.

## 1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Plan

The Lake Cascade RMP is a 10-year plan to provide management direction for lands and waters under Reclamation jurisdiction in the vicinity of Lake Cascade, located near Cascade, Idaho. Collectively, the entire area is referred to as the "RMP Study Area" in this document.

The first RMP prepared for Lake Cascade was completed and approved in June 1991. The purpose of this RMP update is to address current and anticipated future issues to permit the orderly and coordinated development and management of lands and facilities and the water surface under Reclamation jurisdiction in the RMP Study Area. The updated plan will be used as the basis for directing activities on Reclamation lands and the reservoir in a way that maximizes overall public and resource benefits, and that provides guidance for managing the area during the next 10 years.

Through implementation of the RMP, Reclamation aims to balance competing and conflicting demands for differing uses and to maximize

compatibility with surrounding land uses, while affording an appropriate level of resource protection and enhancement.

Over the course of implementing the RMP, it will be reviewed, reevaluated, and revised (if necessary) in cooperation with all involved agencies and Tribes to reflect changing conditions and management objectives. If a proposed modification to the RMP would significantly affect area resources or public use, opportunities for public involvement will be provided. The RMP will be fully updated at the end of its 10-year life.

In addition to this introductory chapter, the RMP contains the five chapters summarized below.

Chapter 2 summarizes the relevant natural, visual, cultural, and socioeconomic resources around the reservoir. The resource inventory describes existing conditions and lays the framework for identifying suitable resources for a variety of land and water uses, as well as sensitive resources that require special protection, enhancement, or restoration.

Chapter 3 summarizes existing land use and management. The range of existing land uses is described and existing land use designations and agreements identified. These include: Project facilities and general operations (i.e., Cascade Dam and Lake Cascade); agreements, easements and permits; encroachments; public facilities, utilities and services; recreational uses; and access and transportation.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the RMP planning process, including the public involvement program and input received through newsbrief response forms, meetings/workshops, hearings, and agency consultation. This chapter also describes Reclamation's efforts regarding its trust responsibilities to the affected Tribes. All of this information helped identify the range of issues and concerns, establish goals and objectives, identify the range of

alternative plans for study, and modify the Preferred Alternative, which became the RMP.

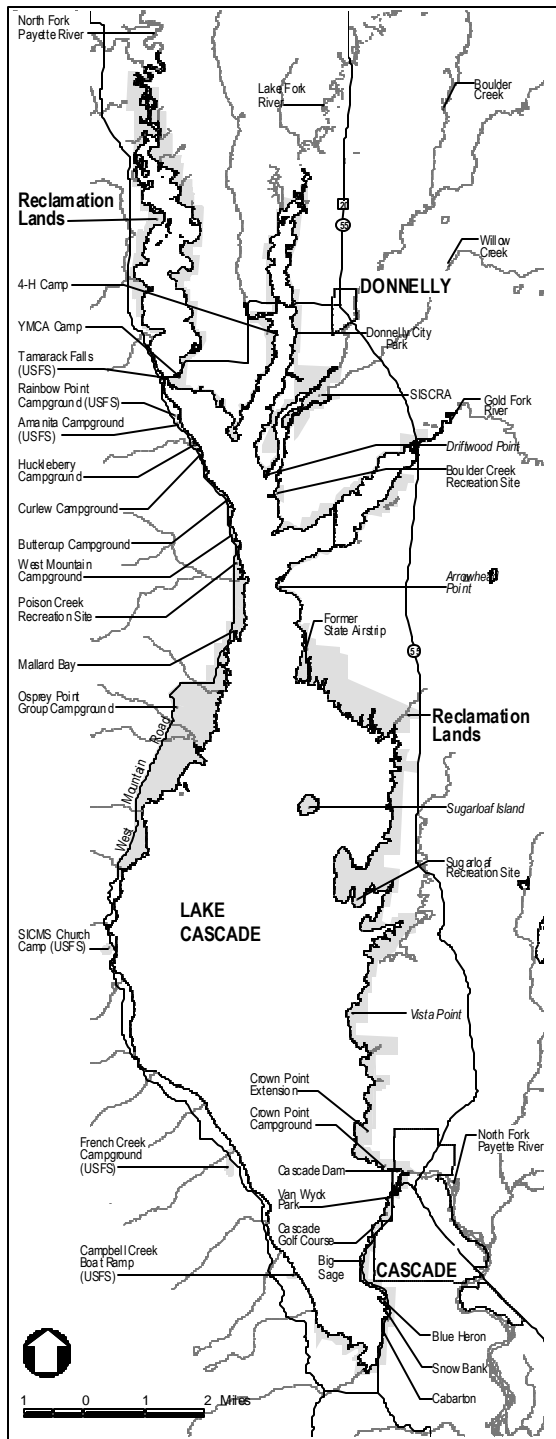
Chapter 5 is the core of the RMP and provides a detailed description of the land use designations, and Goals, Objectives, and Management Actions associated with the plan. The Goals, Objectives, and Management Actions are organized according to the following five themes: (1) natural resources; (2) cultural resources; (3) recreation resources; (4) operations, maintenance, and enforcement; and (5) land use, access, and implementation.

Chapter 6 presents the implementation program associated with the management actions set forth in Chapter 5. This includes a description of program phasing, priorities, and responsible entities, as well as the process involved with amending and updating the plan.

### **1.3 Location and Description of the RMP Study Area**

As shown in Figure 1.3-1, the RMP Study Area consists of Reclamation-owned lands and adjacent lands surrounding Lake Cascade. Reclamation lands comprise a total of nearly 7,000 acres. These lands vary in width from approximately 10 feet to more than 1 mile around most of the reservoir.

Lake Cascade is located on the North Fork of the Payette River in the west central mountains of Idaho at the western edge of Long Valley. The reservoir is approximately 80 miles north of the Boise metropolitan area by State Highway (SH) 55. The City of Cascade is near the south end of the reservoir, and the City of Donnelly is near the north end; both cities lie to the east of the reservoir. Reclamation administers a narrow strip of land of irregular width around most of the reservoir. Most of the lands west of the reservoir away from the immediate shoreline are administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Boise National Forest. The remaining



**Figure 1.3-1. RMP Study Area.**

surrounding land is privately owned, except for isolated parcels of state and Federal lands.

When the reservoir is full, there are 26,307 acres of surface water at Lake Cascade and 86 miles of shoreline. The reservoir extends along

21 miles of the North Fork of the Payette River and is 4.5 miles wide at its widest point. The northern end of the reservoir is located near the confluence of the North Fork of the Payette River, the Gold Fork River, Boulder Creek, and Lake Fork Creek. The only island in the reservoir is Sugarloaf Island, which rises 140 feet above the high water line and is approximately 100 acres in size.

The reservoir is an important recreation resource in the region, especially for residents of the Boise metropolitan area. In addition, Lake Cascade is located adjacent to SH 55, a major north-south transportation corridor in western Idaho. Several roads lead from the highway to the reservoir.



**Photo 1-1. Lake Cascade**

Lake Cascade is situated at 4,828 feet above mean sea level. The reservoir is shallow, with an average depth of 26.5 feet. The mean annual drawdown was 16 feet during the first 30 years of operating at full capacity. However, an administrative decision was made in the early 1980s to maintain the reservoir at a 300,000 acre-foot minimum pool, and the mean annual drawdown has been reduced to 12 feet. This has helped to maintain higher water quality and protect the reservoir fishery from the most severe drawdowns and has maintained recreational access later into the summer season and fall. The lowest water levels are typically reached in October, the highest in June or July.

## 1.4 Project History

Cascade Dam, which created Lake Cascade as part of the Payette Division of the Boise Project, was authorized by Congress on March 27, 1905 under the provisions of the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902 (32 Stat. 388). Funds for construction of the dam were appropriated in the Act of June 28, 1941 (55 Stat. 303); construction of the dam was completed in 1948. The reservoir was first filled to capacity in 1957. The dam and reservoir operate under the supervision of the Area Manager in Reclamation's Snake River Area Office in Boise, Idaho.



Photo 1-2. Aerial view of Cascade Dam

Lake Cascade was authorized by Congress primarily for irrigation and Federal hydroelectric power production purposes. The Cascade power plant is licensed to Idaho Power Company under a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license. The Idaho Power Company holds a natural flow water right for 200 cubic feet per second (cfs) for power generation. Generally, the 200 cfs flow is the minimum reservoir release rate but it may be lower if the natural flow available for use is less than 200 cfs. Reclamation has entered into contracts with downstream irrigators to provide them specified amounts of storage space in the reservoir. They are then entitled to the use of the water that accrues to that storage space. Recreation and fish and wildlife are recognized values of the reservoir which are to be protected and enhanced as much as possible, subject to

meeting Reclamation's fundamental irrigation and power commitments.

The Congressionally authorized minimum pool of 50,000 acre-feet was changed to 46,662 acre-feet based on the most recent bathymetric survey published in May 1998 (Reclamation 1998). In 1995, Reclamation allocated 300,000 acre-feet of inactive and un-contracted storage space, below elevation 4,809.21 feet, for maintenance of a conservation pool. A subsequent resurvey of the reservoir and new area capacity table has determined that the total storage volume at elevation 4,809.21 feet is 293,956 acre-feet.

## 1.5 Overview of Public Involvement, Agency and Tribal Coordination

Reclamation conducted an extensive public involvement program as part of the RMP planning process to ensure representation and participation by all those interested in the future of Lake Cascade. To achieve full representation, the program was designed to reach a user population that was dispersed over a broad geographical area, representing diverse points of view, and enthusiastic in participating in the RMP planning process.

The public involvement program consisted of four primary elements: (1) eight newsbriefs mailed to agencies, Tribes, elected officials, organizations, media, and individuals; (2) three sets of public meetings/workshops; (3) eight meetings with a group formed as part of the RMP planning process to represent key stakeholders (including agencies, Tribes, and interest groups in the area); and (4) a public web site providing access to newsbriefs, draft materials, and meeting announcements. These elements, as well as additional agency and Tribal consultation efforts, are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.