

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION PODCAST
MARIAS / MILK RIVER DIVISION RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES
AUGUST 2012
4:37 RUNNING TIME

(USBR Sounder)

Welcome to the Bureau of Reclamation Great Plains Region Podcast.

Tucked away in north central Montana, not far from the Canadian border, is a recreation area that allows visitors to get under some serious big sky without having to venture too far from civilization.

Michael Hilliard with Reclamation's Chester office is a Natural Resource Specialist for the Marias – Milk River Division:

(HILLIARD01 :21)

We have four dams up here on the hi-line, Sherburne Dam, which is over by Glacier National Park, Tiber Dam, 18 miles South-West of Chester, Fresno Dam, over by Havre, Montana, and that's about 14 miles West of Havre, and then we also have Nelson Dam, about 18 miles East of Malta, Montana.

The area offers not only spectacular scenery, but also decent fishing on the reservoirs:

(HILLIARD02 :15)

Some of the most popular fish are walleye and northern pike, we also have rainbow and brown trout, those are the main ones that people are out to fish for. We also have some smaller species, there's perch in there as well as various other types of fish.

(HILLIARD03 :10)

In 2007, the state record walleye was caught from shore, so there's some pretty good shore fishing, that was 17-point-seven-five pounds, for a walleye – that's pretty good.

The top-notch angling doesn't just happen during the long lazy days of summer in the region, the Marias / Milk River Division is also home to excellent ice fishing.

(HILLIARD04 :28)

We have plenty of trophy fish that are caught on the reservoirs, we have a lot of fishermen that take advantage of the ice fishing during the winter season, kind of more on the northern side of Tiber, we get quite a bit of ice fishermen there and they catch pike, and pike's a pretty popular ice fish, and walleye as well. Fishing's all season long, it's just a matter of where you go and how you get out there to do it.

If just enjoying the great outdoors in the Great Plains Region is your thing, each of the reservoirs features free camping that combines open spaces with easy access:

(HILLIARD05 :41)

That's kind of one of the unique settings up here with all of the recreation areas. Tiber in particular has 8 recreation areas, there's 181 miles of shoreline, so anybody is free and willing to camp on Reclamation land as long as they are participating in a safe manner...it's all spread out on the North side and on the South side, there's plenty of recreation opportunities. The Tiber Marina, this year we got a concessionaire and on their site they do charge camping, but they also provide electrical hookup, and water hookups, and full service for RV's and campers.

The Marias / Milk River Division Projects on the high-line of Montana offers great habitat for a number of game species, attracting hunters from all over the world.

(HILLIARD06 :26)

On the hunting side, you got whitetail and mule deer, you also have plenty of pronghorn antelope, see those quite a bit. Upland game birds, you have sharptail, sage grouse and ringneck pheasant, and every now and again you'll see some Hungarian partridge. During migration season, there's an abundance of waterfowl, ducks, geese, all sorts of shorebirds show up there.

Each of the reservoirs and recreation areas in the Marias / Milk River Division offers outdoor enthusiasts all kinds of year round fun on and around the lakes. Hilliard says Fresno Reservoir is a popular destination for water sports:

(HILLIARD07 :25)

One thing I'd like people to know, it's not just hunters and fishermen that show up, you get a lot of boaters, you get a lot of people wakeboarding and jet ski activity, lot of water skiing, lot of people just head out there for a family picnic, or just to camp. There's a lot of variety of recreationists, some people just go out there to hike around and walk the shoreline.

For more information on the Marias / Milk River Division, visit www.usbr.gov/gp/mtao/

(USBR Sounder)

This podcast has been produced for the Bureau of Reclamation Great Plains Region.

RECLAMATION....MANAGING WATER IN THE WEST.