



In 1903 the authorization for the Milk River Irrigation Project launched one of the first irrigation projects to be initiated in the United States under the Reclamation Act of 1902.

The lack of facilities to store early spring runoff prompted an investigation in 1891 to find a means of supplementing low summer river flows. Investigations found the most feasible plan for developing a large irrigation project involved the diversion of the St. Mary River into the headwaters of the Milk River. Since both rivers flow through Canada, it was necessary to execute an International Treaty before the plan could be completed.

Fresno Reservoir has 32,802 acre-feet allocated to joint use storage, which is used for flood control, irrigation and other conservation uses. Total flood damages reduced by Fresno Reservoir from 1939-2011 were \$32,068,300.

### Milk River Project

Fresno Dam impounds the Milk River forming Fresno Reservoir. This Reclamation facility is one of many settlers built small individual irrigation systems and, in 1890, constructed a community diversion dam in the vicinity of the present-day Fort Belknap Diversion Dam.

### Flood Control

The diversity of land surrounding Fresno Reservoir provides habitat for many wildlife species. Most of the land is leased out for grazing. However, the Fresno Wildlife Management Area includes approximately 2,700 acres on the upper end of the reservoir and is administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. This area provides suitable viewing of whitetail deer, mule deer, antelope, waterfowl and upland game birds.

Current reservoir elevations and safe launching elevations for boat ramps at Reclamation reservoirs in Montana can be accessed at <http://www.usbr.gov/gp/boat/>.

Facility security and safety requires that some areas near the dam, outlet works and spillway are closed to the public. These areas are marked by fences, cableways and signs.

Impounded in Fresno Reservoir. A provision is also made for flood control benefits. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) owns and operates Fresno Dam.

The primary purpose of Fresno Dam is irrigation for agricultural production. Fresno Dam was approved by the President of the United States in August 1935 and constructed under the National Industrial Recovery Act. Construction of Fresno Dam was completed in 1939.

Located on the Milk River 14 miles west of Havre, Montana, Fresno Dam is a compacted earthfill dam with a crest length of 2,070 feet and a structural height of 110 feet. It contains 2,105,000 cubic yards of material. An overflow-type spillway at the north end of the dam provides for a flow of 51,360 cubic feet per second through the concrete-lined channel. The outlet works discharge a maximum of 2,180 cubic feet per second through two 72-inch steel pipe outlet tubes. Conservation storage of 103,000 acre-feet is impounded in Fresno Reservoir. A provision is also made for flood control benefits. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) owns and operates Fresno Dam.

With 7,388 surface acres, the reservoir offers fishing for walleye, northern pike, perch and trout. Fresno is one of Montana's best warm water fishing locations. Rainbow trout were once stocked in the reservoir. However, during the late 1940s northern pike were found and trout populations declined. Northern pike continue to do well in Fresno. Walleye were introduced in the late 1950s and Fresno has become a popular fishing area for walleye.

Reclamation owned lands surrounding Fresno provide hunting opportunities for waterfowl, antelope, whitetail deer, mule deer, upland game birds, and occasionally moose and elk.

### Recreation, Fish and Wildlife

Fresno Reservoir provides recreation enthusiasts with opportunities such as boating, camping, fishing, picnicking, water skiing, hunting and wildlife viewing. Reclamation administers public recreation on the federal lands surrounding the reservoir. Privately owned cabins on federal land are administered under lease agreements issued by Reclamation. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks manages the fishery in the reservoir. A wildlife management area at the west end, and a public access area on the Milk River immediately downstream of the dam.

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### Fresno Dam

### Fresno Reservoir Recreation Facilities

The reservoir, with 65 miles of shoreline, extends upstream of the dam for approximately 25 miles. Reclamation maintains six recreational areas (shown on map) around the reservoir. The Pack-it-in/Pack-it-out policy refers to visitors removing all trash they have brought in or created

**Kremlin Bay Campground** — Designated campsites, restroom facilities, day use area, and a concrete boat ramp are located 3.5 miles east and 4 miles north of Kremlin. No trash services are available; Pack-it-in/Pack-it-out policy.

**Overlook & Boat Ramp Day Use Area** — Concrete boat ramp, paved parking lot, restroom facilities and a group use shelter are located directly south of the dam. Trash dumpsters are available.

**Fresno Beach Day Use Area** — Designated campsite, 2 restroom facilities, day use areas, parking and gravel road access. Trash dumpsters are available.

**Jaycees Beach** — Cabin sites, concrete/dirt boat ramp, day use area, parking and gravel road access. Trash dumpsters are available.

**Kiehn's Bay** — Restroom facilities, day use area, camping, parking and gravel road access; Pack-it-in/Pack-it-out policy.

**Fresno Tailwater FAS** — Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks manages this area located immediately below Fresno Dam as a fishing access site. Restroom facilities available.

### Contact Information:

**Marias-Milk Rivers**  
**Division Office (406) 759-5077**  
**Hill County Sheriff (406) 265-2512**  
**Emergency Services Dial 911**

*Cell phone service is very limited around the reservoir.*

### Campground Rules and Regulations

**The following activities are prohibited in the Fresno Reservoir recreation areas:**

1. Discharge of firearms or fireworks (including air guns, archery equipment and paintball guns).
2. Willful injury to, defacement or destruction of public buildings, structures, signs, equipment and other property.
3. Willful injury to, destruction or removal of trees, shrubs, flowers, vegetation and soils.
4. Leaving a campsite or property unattended for more than 24 consecutive hours.
5. Camping at any one location for a period longer than 14 days during any 30 consecutive-day period.
6. Littering the grounds or placing trash into restroom facilities.
7. Use of loud, profane or abusive language or playing loud music. Excessive noise during quiet hours from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.
8. Discharge of holding tanks, waste water from toilets, baths, showers or sinks onto the ground or into restroom facilities.
9. Allowing pets or livestock to roam free or leaving them unattended. Domestic animals must be physically constrained or kept in a structure or enclosure. It is your responsibility to clean up after your own animals.
10. Operation of any motorized vehicle in excess of 15mph, or posted speed, is limited to established roads. Off highway vehicle use is prohibited.

**Failure to comply with campground rules and regulations may result in eviction from the property.**

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## Fresno Reservoir Recreation Area











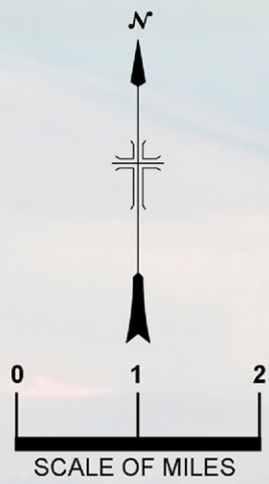
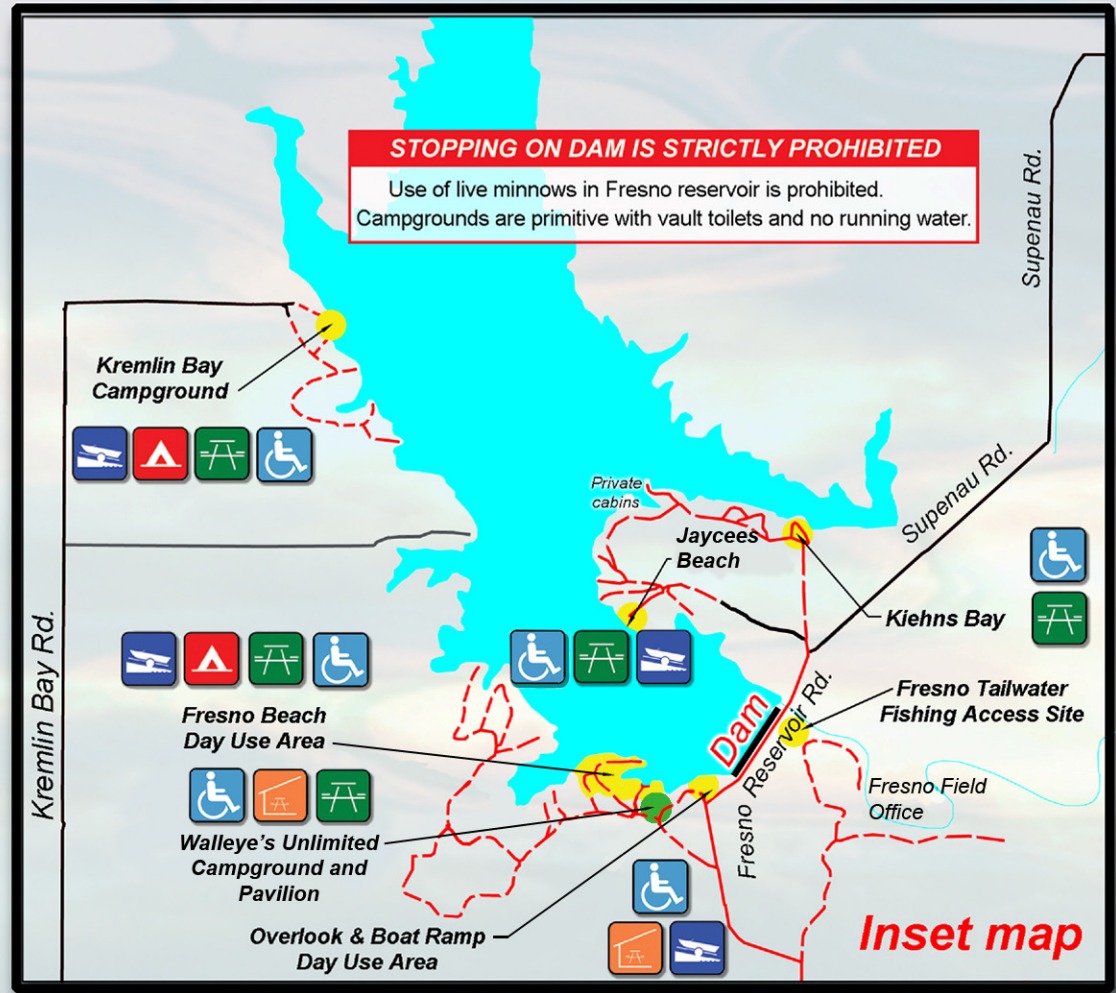

Use your smart phone's QR CODE reader app for more information



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Great Plains Region



# Fresno Reservoir Recreation Area

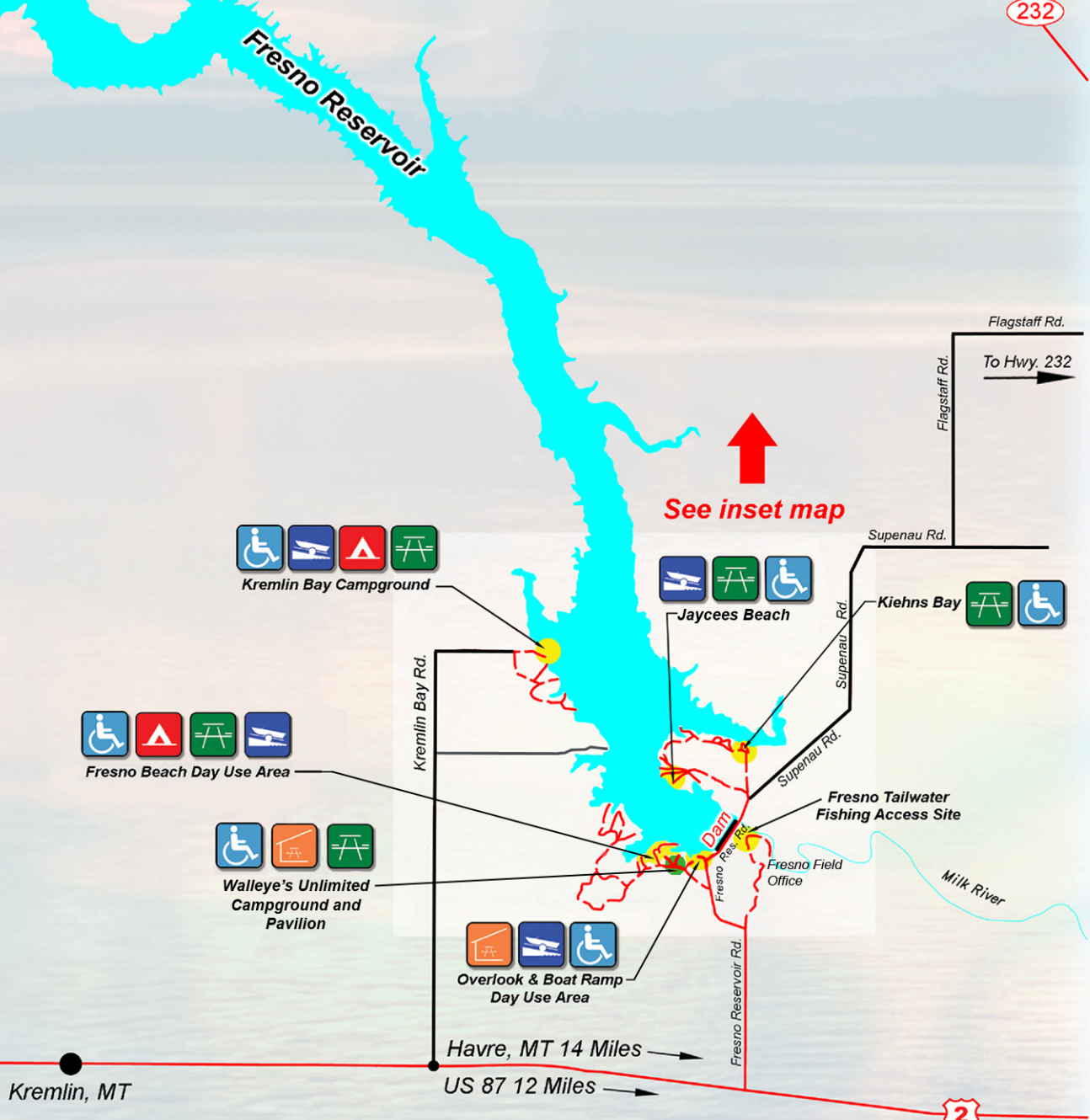


**STOPPING ON DAM IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED**  
 Use of live minnows in Fresno reservoir is prohibited.  
 Campgrounds are primitive with vault toilets and no running water.

## Legend

- PAVED ROAD
- GRAVEL ROAD
- UNIMPROVED ROAD

- Accessible Toilets
- Day Use
- Group Use
- Camping Allowed
- Boat Launch



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