

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## **Belle Fourche Reservoir Resource Management Plan**



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation

# Belle Fourche Dam and Reservoir

Operated by:  
Belle Fourche  
Irrigation District



**Location: Offstream Storage on Owl Creek from Belle Fourche River 10 miles northeast of Belle Fourche, SD**

**Type: Homogeneous Earthfill**

**Drainage Area: 4,480 sq. mi.**

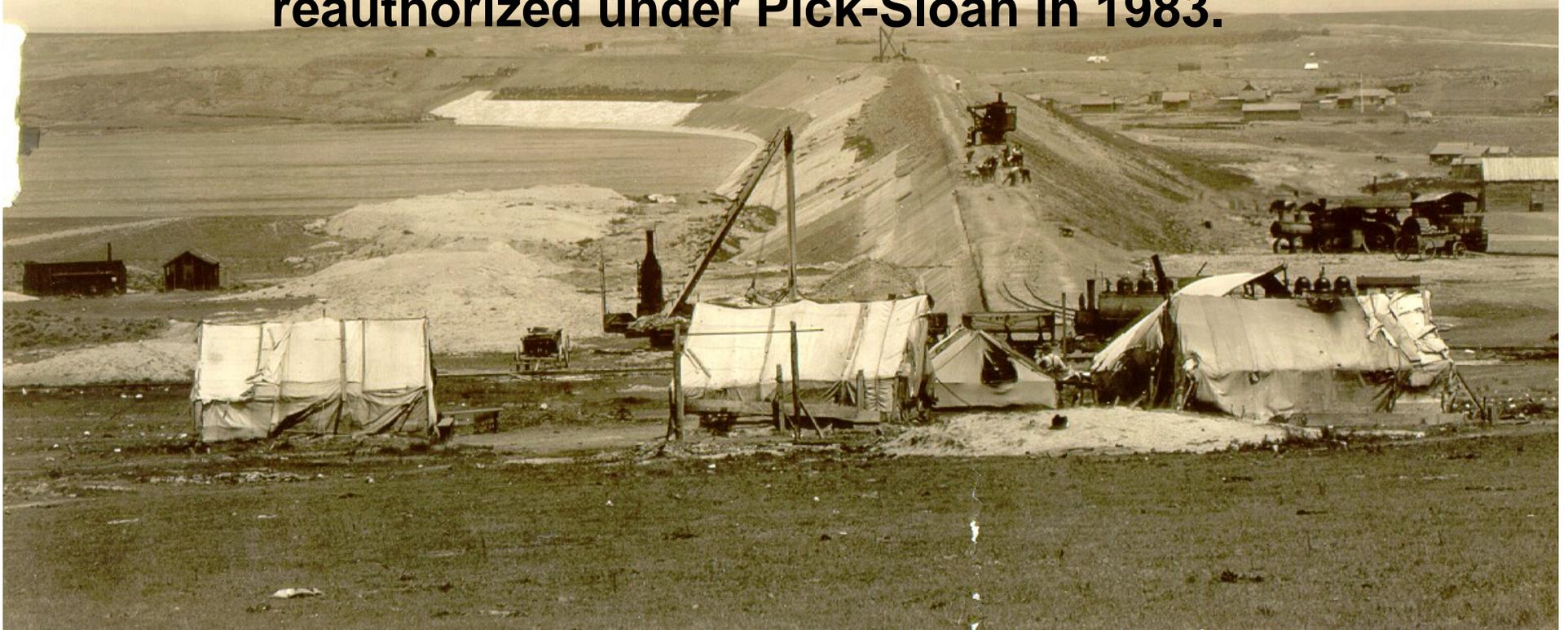
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# Belle Fourche Reservoir

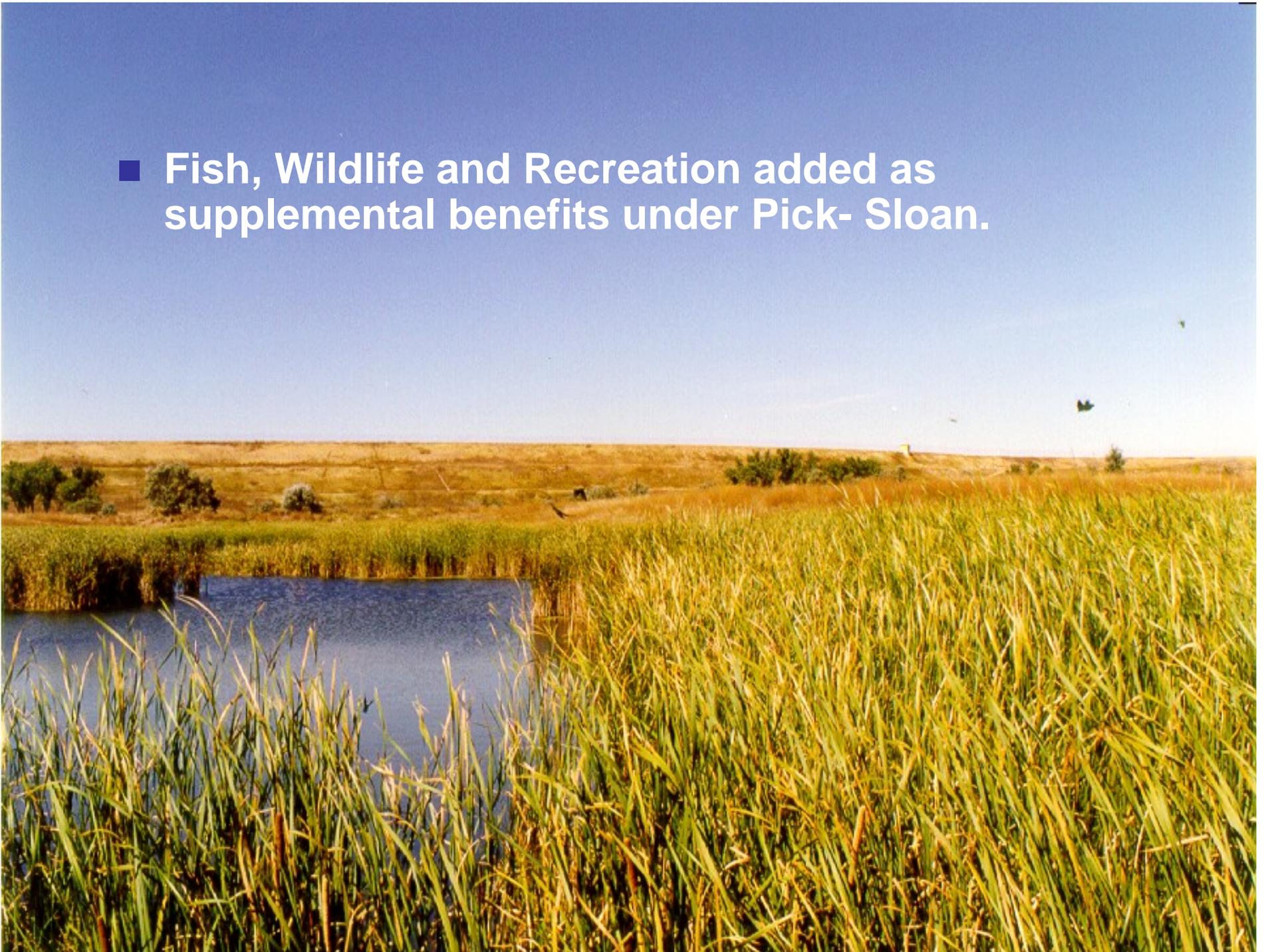
An aerial photograph of the Belle Fourche Reservoir. The water is a deep blue-green color, with some lighter, sandy areas near the shore. The surrounding land is green and appears to be a mix of fields and wooded areas. There are several roads and paths visible, some of which are dirt roads. The reservoir is surrounded by a low wall or dam, and there are some buildings and structures visible on the land.

**When full, water covers 8,040 acres, with 6,653 acres of surrounding land.**

- **One of Reclamation's earliest irrigation projects.**
- **Construction began in 1906, completed in 1912.**
- **Originally authorized for irrigation under the 1902 Reclamation Act, reauthorized under Pick-Sloan in 1983.**

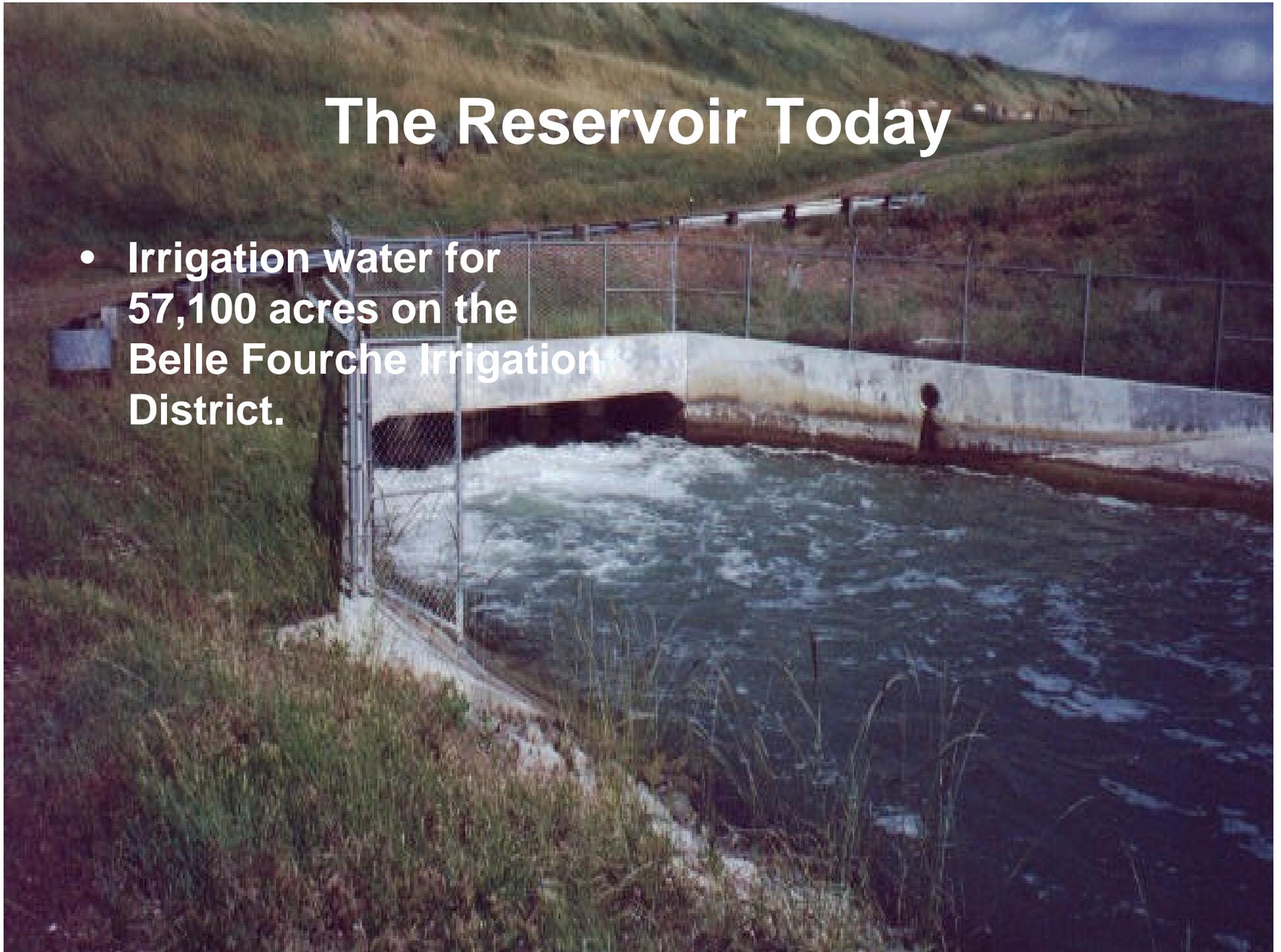


- **Fish, Wildlife and Recreation added as supplemental benefits under Pick- Sloan.**



# The Reservoir Today

- Irrigation water for 57,100 acres on the Belle Fourche Irrigation District.



- Popular warm water fishery
- Water recreation
- Hunting
- Camping
- Day Uses



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- **Native mixed grass prairie**
- **Wildlife habitat**
- **Prairie vistas**



# Rich History

- **Civilian Conservation Corps Camp 1933-1942**
- **Prisoner of War Camp 1944-1948**



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# Diverse Recreation Uses



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# Resource Management Plans

- A written plan that provides guidance for managing resources on Reclamation lands.
- Include information on history, resources, current and future uses, and objectives for future management.
- Identify appropriate types of development.

# Why Belle Fourche Reservoir?

- Annual visitation has increased from 60,000 in 1991 to 167,369 in 2000 yet there are very few recreation facilities at the reservoir.
- Need a framework under which Reclamation can work with Managing Partners to accommodate visitor use while protecting natural resources and public safety.

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# Managing Partners

- **Reclamation is required by law to develop recreation through partnerships. Without a partner, only basic facilities such as guardrails and vault toilets may be provided.**



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# Managing Partners at the Reservoir

- **South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks**
  - Belle Fourche Irrigation District
  - Butte County Sheriff's Department
    - South Dakota National Guard

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# Developing the Plan

- The Plan is also an Environmental Assessment.
- It took several years, and extensive data collection and public involvement to develop.
- It does not address water operations or the Belle Fourche Irrigation District.



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# Public Open Houses



# The Final Plan

- **Designates Land Use Categories at the reservoir**
- **Developed Recreation**
- **Primitive Recreation**
- **Wildlife Management**
- **Day Use**
- **Administrative**

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# Developed Recreation

- These areas will provide a range of campsite types with conveniences such as paved roads, water, electricity, comfort stations, picnic shelters and fish cleaning stations.



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# Primitive Recreation

- These areas offer only basic recreation facilities such as designated primitive campsites, vault toilets and fire-grates.



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# Wildlife Management Area

- These areas emphasize wildlife habitat and a wide variety of day use activities such as hunting, fishing, and hiking. Overnight camping is not allowed.



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# Day Use Area

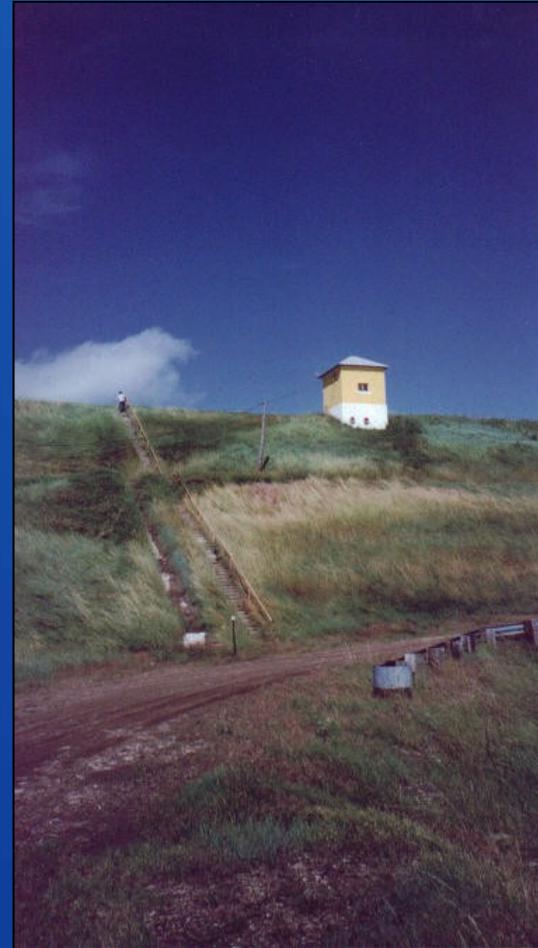
- These areas contain boat ramps, picnic sites, interpretive sites and other day use visitor conveniences.



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# Administrative Area

- These areas are set aside for Project operations and maintenance.



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# The Belle Fourche Reservoir Resource Management Plan

This map shows the land use categories, roads open to the public and the planned improvements that will begin in 2004 and continue for the next several years. Installation of water and electrical service to Rocky Point will be the first priority followed by road paving and campsite construction.

The purpose of the plan is to protect and manage lands and resources associated with the reservoir consistent with the authorized project purposes. It will guide the management of resources at the reservoir for the next ten years and will be implemented gradually. *The plan does not include reservoir water operations or lands within the Belle Fourche Irrigation District.*



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# The Plan provides Guidance for:

- Law Enforcement
- Fees
- Sanitation
- Roads
- Access
- Issuance of Permits
- Vegetation Management
- Recreation Developments
- Camping Locations

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# Details of the Plan

- An access plan will allow fishermen to reach the shoreline during low water periods.
- Grazing leases will be issued through competitive bid if grazing is the selected management tool.
- Regulations will be developed.
- Fees will be charged for camping and at the entrance to the developed area of Rocky Point.
- Roads will be improved for access to the shore and parking areas.
- Excess roads will be closed or eliminated. The Road to Rocky Point Boat Ramp will be paved.

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# Details of the Plan

- **Primitive campsites will be provided north of Rocky Point and on the east side of the reservoir.**
- **Fees, designated camping, and vehicle restrictions will not begin until developed and primitive recreation sites are available by an estimated 2006.**

# Rocky Point

- Improvements on Rocky Point will be cost- shared by Reclamation and South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks.
- Includes developed campground with single and group sites, comfort station, vault toilets, fish cleaning station, picnic shelters, and playground.



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# What's Next?

- **Installation of water and electrical line to Rocky Point will begin in 2004**
- **Paving of the road to Rocky Point and campground development on Rocky Point is estimated to begin in 2005.**