

- Repair and improve the access and circulation roads;
- Construct fish cleaning station with grinder;
- Develop the area with additional shelters, vault toilets, playground equipment, and potable water for group picnickers and/or campers; and
- Provide additional shade by planting trees or building shelters.

Rationale. A land use classification of Multiple Resource Management: Recreation - Low Density is appropriate for the Spillway Area. This area forms a buffer between the spillway channel and the more intensively used Left Tailrace Recreation Area. The organized development of limited facilities would lessen the potential negative impact of wildlife habitat.

6.4. NORTH SHORE RECREATION AREA

Classification. Recreation

Management Agency. Corps of Engineers

Location. Located in Buffalo County, the North Shore Recreation Area is north of the left abutment of Big Bend Dam. This recreation area is 1 mile southwest of the town of Fort Thompson and approximately 25 miles north of Chamberlain.

Access is from State Highway 47. Circulation throughout the area is by both paved and gravel roads.

Description. The North Shore Recreation Area is located along a 3.5-mile stretch of shoreline. This recreation area is approximately 341 acres of which roughly 308 acres are developed. The terrain ranges from relatively flat on the northern end to steep cutbanks along the shoreline on the south. Very few drainages are present.

Facilities in this area consist of a day use area, campground, and boat ramp. Day use facilities include picnic shelters, a playground, softball field, horseshoe pits, sand volleyball court, basketball court, vault toilets, and a swimming beach. The first beach area has a separate access road from State Highway 47 and is often frequented by children and family groups from the Fort Thompson area. In 1990, floating docks were anchored in this area for use by the swimmers.

The campground west of the first swim beach has potable water and camp pads. During the 1980s, the use of this camping area declined because of the increased demand for areas with more highly developed facilities. After a series of budget cuts in 1986, a decision was made to no longer maintain the campground. The area was reopened in 1998 and is used by campers seeking primitive conditions or by campers wanting to get away from the crowded areas at the Left Tailrace Recreation Area.

The two-lane North Shore boat ramp, complete with courtesy dock, is the most popular ramp on the lower end of Lake Sharpe. In 1990, a safety light was installed at the boat ramp. The boat basin was dredged in 1987 and the material was deposited in the little-used campground to the west of the boat ramp. This campground has since been closed.

Minor to moderate shoreline erosion is occurring in this area; however, no facilities are threatened. Some minor erosion was experienced near the boat ramp, in the boat basin, prior to the construction of the dikes at the mouth of the basin in 1986. In the late 1980s, an upstream sediment-detention dam was breached. The dam was repaired in 1995.

There is evidence of littoral transport of sand on the boat ramp and a sandbar at the mouth of the boat basin. Excessive turbidity in the basin indicates shallow depths and some redistribution of the bottom sediments.

The Lake Sharpe Visitor Center was located one-fourth of a mile west of State Highway 47 and immediately east of the administration building. Constructed in 1972, the visitor center was listed as a stopping point in the Native American Loop tour and offered a panoramic view of Big Bend Dam and Lake Sharpe. Numerous displays provided opportunities to learn about local history and the area's natural resources. Many school children as well as visitors to the Big Bend project toured the center each year. Unfortunately, the visitor center was destroyed by a tornado in June 1992. It now serves as a group picnic shelter.

Seven cultural resource sites are located in the North Shore Recreation Area. Five of these sites are listed on the NRHP. Two sites were inundated when the reservoir was filled. Prior to any future development at or near these locations, an evaluation must be made to determine how the development would affect a particular site and the possible mitigation measures necessary.

Visitor Use. Visitation at the North Shore Recreation Area is highest during the summer. Roughly 6.5 percent of the total project visitation occurs at this recreation area. Visitors to this area are primarily local residents from Buffalo and Lyman Counties. Because the area is near the town of Fort Thompson and is close to the dam, it attracts frequent visitors for day use activities. The excellent boat ramp, swimming beach, ball fields, and picnic shelters are heavily used and add to the area's appeal.

The North Shore Recreation Area is used for both water-oriented and landbased recreation activities. The primary activities include fishing, boating, picnicking, swimming, and group activities. This recreation area is the primary lake access for the southern end of Lake Sharpe.

Over the last 10 years, the area has seen an increase in visitation. This trend can be attributed to improvement of facilities at the swimming beach, sightseers on the Native American Loop tour, the constant pool elevation of Lake Sharpe, and warm summer temperatures.

Resource Objectives.

- Provide lake access for water-oriented recreation;
- Provide recreation facilities for family and group day use and camping activities;
- Provide educational opportunities for regional and local history, as well as wildlife management and observation;
- Provide opportunities to explain and/or interpret the history and cultures of the Crow Creek and Lower Brule Tribes;
- Provide educational opportunities about the Corps' mission, purpose of the Missouri River main stem projects, and history on the Big Bend project;
- Protect and preserve the cultural resources located in this area.

Development Needs.

- Reopen and upgrade the eastern-most campground with full modern amenities;
- Expand the developed area to the west to include additional camping areas, swimming beach, playground area and marina.
- Provide a fish-cleaning facility equipped with a grinder near the boat ramp;
- Construct security lighting at the North shore swimming area;
- Construct dump station;
- Develop cultural learning center in cooperation with the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe;
- Provide development opportunities to concessionaires for water related activities;

- Provide marina facilities such as slips, fuel, supplies, and dry dock storage space to serve powerboats and sailboats; and
- Improve and sign internal circulation roads and parking areas.

Rationale. The North Shore Recreation Area can be expected to remain a primary recreation area at Lake Sharpe. The proximity of population centers, the paved access, and the diversity of the existing and planned recreational facilities and activities will all contribute to the area's continuing attraction. The nearby project structures, such as the dam, powerhouse, and spillway; the powerhouse display area; and the access areas to two lakes (Lake Sharpe and Lake Francis Case) also contribute to the diversity and quality of attractions that draw visitors to the area. Thus, a land use classification of Recreation is appropriate for the North Shore area.

Because of its location on the lake, the North Shore Recreation Area should be developed into a major destination recreation area. The development of a marina in this area would complement future development at the West Bend Recreation Area and the Pierre Marina and Waterfront Recreation Area by offering supplies and fuel for those recreationists visiting the eastern portions of the Big Bend Dam/Lake Sharpe project. This "water trail" linkage between the three areas would contribute to a redistribution of visitation, but also would contribute to the economic viability of other concessions. In addition, it would expose visitors to the outstanding recreation opportunities and attractions inherent to the other project resources.

The easily accessible shoreline in the North Shore Area makes it attractive for water-oriented activities. In addition, the boat ramp provides a significant water access point to other recreation areas and reaches of Lake Sharpe. Visitors to the Left Tailrace Recreation Area often use this ramp in order to take advantage of the Lake Sharpe fisheries.

The Lake Sharpe Visitor Center was one of the focal points of the Native American Loop discussed in Chapter 2. The center was visited by many of the local school children, as well as visitors to the dam. The exhibits on display ranged from Native American artifacts, prairie wildlife, and the early fur trade to the westward migration and settlement of the area.

In addition, this facility offered the opportunity to present the story of the Big Bend Dam/Lake Sharpe project.

Reconstruction of this facility would provide an excellent forum to expand on these ideas. The visitor center is the ideal location to fully explain the purpose of the Big Bend Dam/Lake Sharpe project and its role in the Pick-Sloan Plan. Topics should include why this particular site was selected, the overall environmental effects of the project, and how the project has affected local economies. Special public use values and opportunities at Lake Sharpe should also be addressed.

Another of the major factors to be considered in the development of a new visitor center is the presence of a Sioux Indian Reservation on each bank of Lake Sharpe and the numerous other Indian tribes located all around the State. There are many similarities and dissimilarities between the tribes. The social, political, cultural, and historical environments for each tribe are unusual when compared to other Corps projects. The visitor center would provide an avenue to demonstrate and explain these different environments. In addition, the visitor center could also interpret how traditional values of the local Indian people survived or were modified through the reservation period and how the project relates to modern Sioux values, needs, and opportunities.

The severe damage to the Lake Sharpe Visitor Center, caused by the June 1992 tornado, may afford an opportunity for any interested agency to develop a "Cultural Learning Center." Such a center could provide displays and/or materials to educate, answer questions, and invoke curiosity among the visitors. Establishing a multi-agency Cultural Learning Center in the Fort Thompson area and/or Lower Brule area could result in an increase in visitation by school children and tribal members from all over South Dakota, as well as visitors from the Big Bend Dam/Lake Sharpe project.

6.5. EAST BEND AREA

Classification. Multiple Resource Management: Wildlife Management - General

Management Agency. Corps of Engineers

Location. The East Bend Area is a 15-mile-long reach located in northwestern Buffalo and southwestern Hyde Counties between the North Shore and North Bend Recreation Areas.

Description. This area covers 2,071 acres and is characterized by rolling prairie hills that meet the river in a cutbank or a draw in the southeast. Rough cedar breaks characterize the northwest. The area between contains a mixture of rough breaks with some native prairie grassland and gumbo-type alluvial lands. Eastern red cedar woodlands have developed in several of the upland draws. Native trees, primarily eastern red cedar and ash, grow on the upper terraces and benches and on the nearly flat bottomlands along entering tributaries.

The southern portion of the area is readily accessible to the public. It consists primarily of tallgrass prairie with woody vegetation in some draws. The majority of soils is sandy loam and is suitable for the establishment of trees.