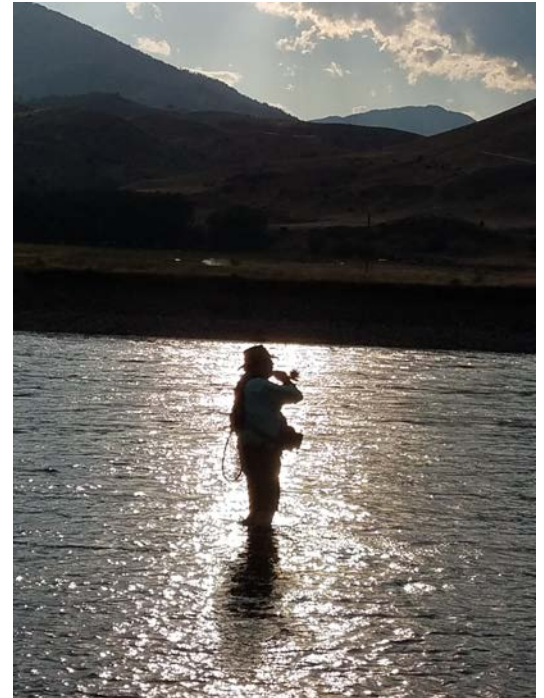
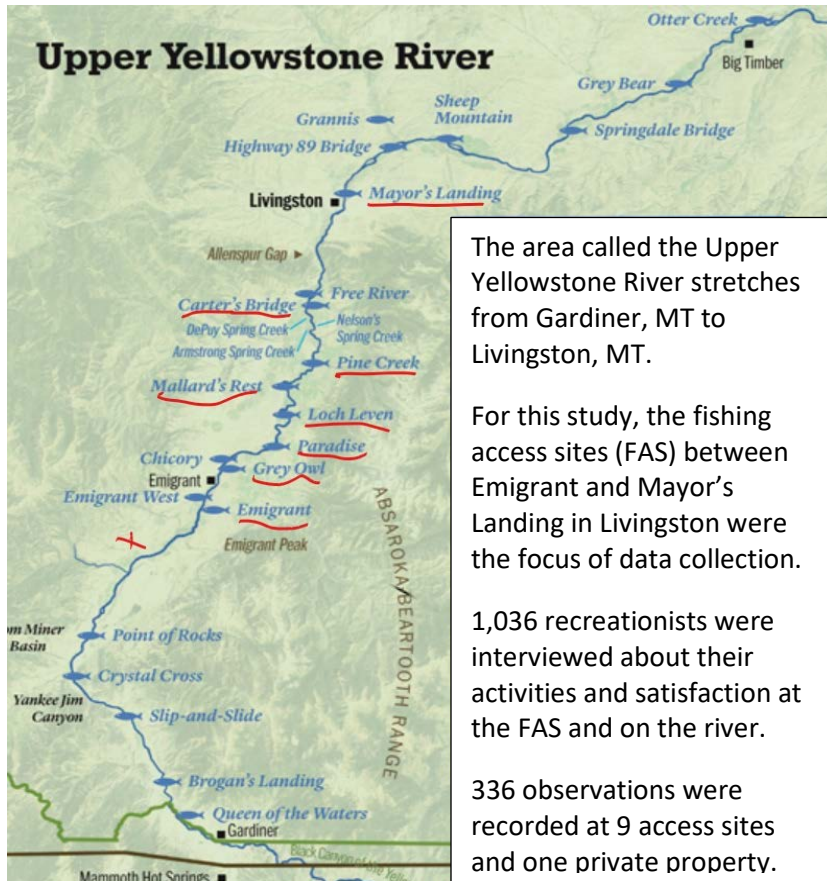


# Executive Summary

## Upper Yellowstone River Monitoring: Usage and User Characteristics

Recreational usage, both fishing and non-fishing, on Montana waterways has grown in the number of users and types of activities over the years. Already, commercial usage is monitored or managed on several Montana rivers including the Madison, Bitterroot, and Blackfoot. The purpose of this study was to conduct exploratory methods that can provide baseline data of all river users on the Upper Yellowstone River (UYR) as a pilot study and guide for future monitoring on other Montana waterways.



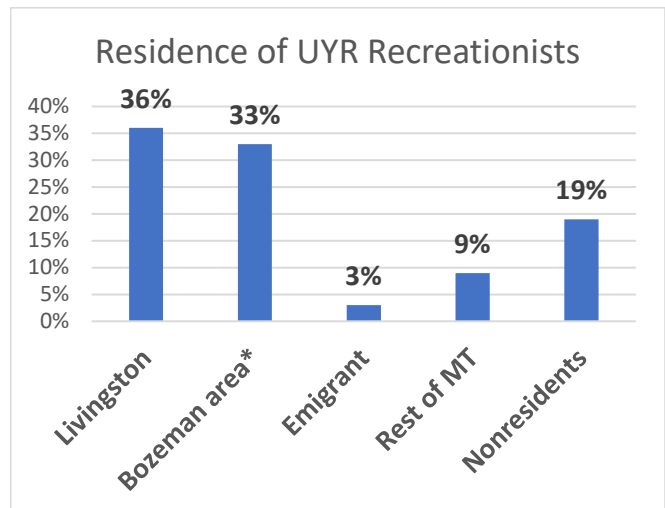
*The majority of UYR use is from the communities near the river (Livingston, Bozeman, Emigrant).*

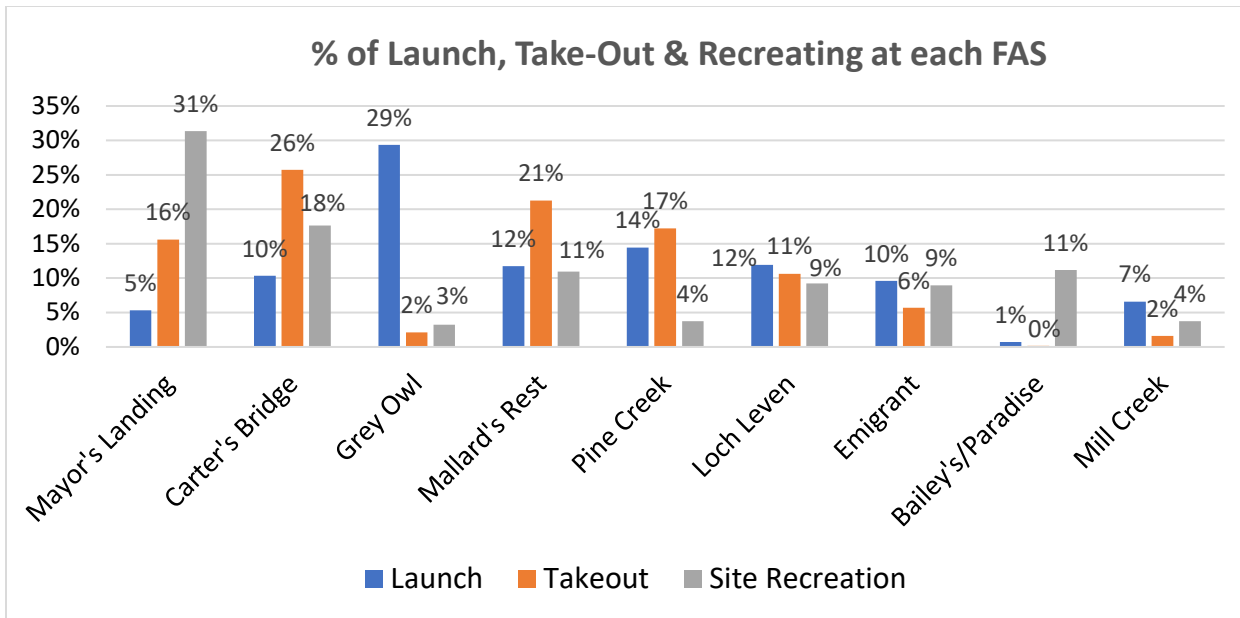
*85% have visited the UYR in the past.*

*73% of users have a personal fishing license or someone in their group has a license.*

- 75% of Montana groups had a fishing license
- 60% of nonresident groups had a fishing license

*90% or higher is the satisfaction rate at put-in, take-out, and the on-river experience.*





***If launching - where users take-out in order of highest take-out numbers to lowest:***

- Launch at Grey Owl - take out at Mallard's Rest, Loch Leven, Pine Creek, or Carter's Bridge
- Launch at Pine Creek – take out at Carter's Bridge, Mayor's Landing, or Hwy89 Bridge
- Launch at Mallard's Rest - take out at Carter's Bridge, Pine Creek, or Mayor's Landing

### Observation Results with highest numbers

***Average number of vehicles***

35.26 - Mallard's Rest FAS (range = 9 to 93 vehicles)

25.59 - Emigrant FAS (range = 5 to 76 vehicles)

***Average number of trailers***

12.73 –Emigrant FAS (range = 1 to 39 trailers)

12.10 – Grey Owl FAS (range = 0 to 43 trailers)



**Recommendations for monitoring river use**

- Depend on cameras for counts on the river.
- Use road counters for a count of vehicles in and out of fishing access sites.
- Use intercept surveys for usage type for full season, then every 3-5 years to compare trends.
- Use observation methods sparingly as it is cumbersome and less reliable.
- Unless there is a dedicated coordinator to train and check on volunteers, it is imperative to hire a researcher to collect data.

This study was funded by the Lodging Facility Use Tax; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group. The full report can be found at: [https://scholarworks.umt.edu/itr\\_pubs/415](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/itr_pubs/415)