

Recreation Opportunities

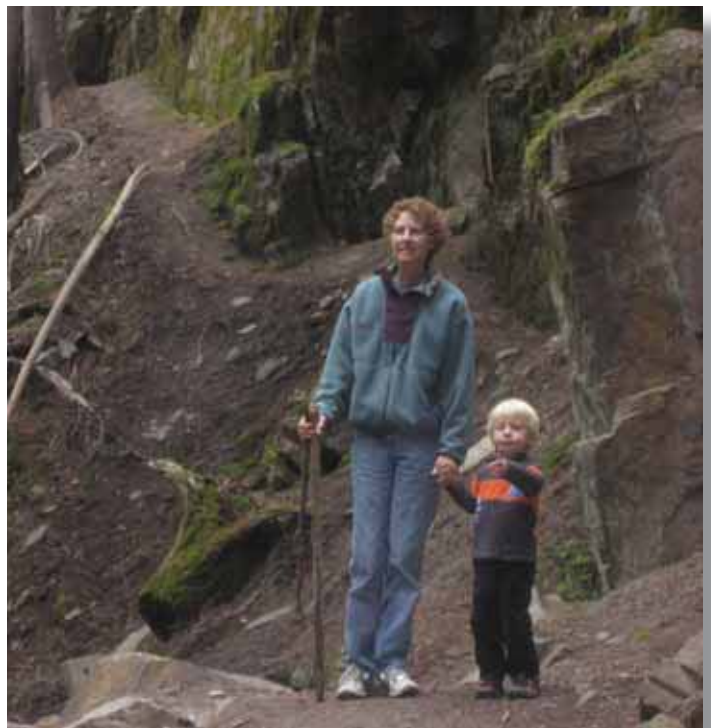
Lincoln County offers snow-covered mountains, valleys, crystal lakes and clear mountain streams for an abundance of outdoor activities.

Recreational activities abound year around. Snow season brings the enjoyment of cross country skiing, ice fishing, snowmobiling and snowshoeing. Snow can be expected as early as October and continue through May.

The seasons of spring and summer bring out the brilliant colors of nature as well as open up an abundance of activities to enjoy. Fall colors dominate the local views and denote the beginning of hunting season in northwest Montana.

Various times of the year the forest offers the recreationist camping, picnicking, backpacking, floatboating, boating, kayaking, fishing, mountain biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, wildlife viewing, just to name a few.

- **Ten Lakes Scenic Area:** The area was named for the Ten Lakes basin along the Canadian Border and offers spectacular beauty at Therriault Lakes and Bluebird Basin areas. Wildflowers abound in spring and summer along with the much-coveted huckleberry. All this can be enjoyed on over 89 miles of trails.



Little North Fork Interpretive Trail

- **Northwest Peaks Scenic Area** provides acres of primitive recreation opportunities. There are only a few miles of trails, but of those a visit to Yaak Falls is a sight to behold. The Northwest Peak Trail offers spectacular views of the upper West Fork Yaak River drainage.
- **Cabinet Mountains Wilderness** has more than 20 trails giving access to dozens of small lakes, alpine meadows and panoramic views.
- **Ross Creek Scenic Area** is home to the ancient cedar grove at Ross Creek. These giant trees reach 8 feet in diameter and 175 feet tall. Growing from the shady forest floor are lush ferns and flowers.
- **Kootenai Falls Swinging Bridge**, between Troy and Libby, was built by the Forest Service to access forest fires across the Kootenai River. The bridge offers a spectacular view of the Kootenai River gorge directly below Kootenai Falls.



Ross Creek Cedar Grove

Wildlife: The forests of the Kootenai are home to a huge variety of wildlife including elk, deer, moose, big-horn sheep, mountain lion, black bear and grizzly bear. The Ural Tweed Big Horn Sheep are native to western Montana and can be viewed along Lake Koocanusa. Our smaller wildlife neighbors are weasel, mink, beaver, otter, squirrel, pine martin, skunk, bobcat and lynx, just to name a few.

Fishing: Rivers, streams and lakes offer habitat to a variety of fish; rainbow, westslope cutthroat, bull and brook trout and mountain whitefish. The kokanee salmon, yellow perch, largemouth and small-mouth bass and sunfish are found in the lower elevation lakes.

Feathered Friends: Our population of birds has 191 species that have been recorded. Just a few too many to list!! A check list is available at the Forest Service Office in your area.

Camping: The Kootenai National Forest has 39 campgrounds for the outdoorsman, 20 of those are open year around.

Lookout Cabin Rental: The Kootenai National Forest has a number of former fire lookouts that are now available to rent. They include Webb Mountain, McGuire Mountain, Mt. Wam, Big Creek Baldy and Stahl Peak.



McGuire Mountain Lookout

Hiking, Backpacking: Over 300,000 acres of backcountry with no roads are available with 1,500 miles of trails. Many trailheads have sign-in boxes to help find hikers in an emergency. Always tell someone your destination and time you are due back.

Hunting: Elk, deer, black bear, mountain sheep, mountain goat, moose, turkey and grouse.



Summer fun on Lake Koocanusa

Swimming: Most lower elevation lakes.

Power Boating: Power boating on larger lakes and reservoirs.

Floating: Parts of the Kootenai, Fisher, Yaak, Tobacco and Bull rivers.

Horseback Riding: Individual trail riding with a limit of 8 head of stock is available without a permit.

Skiing: Downhill at Turner Mountain; some cross country skiing trails are intermittently groomed with unlimited opportunities on backcountry roads.

Snowmobiling: There are 166 miles of groomed snowmobile trails.

Stay Safe in Bear Country!!

If you are camping in the wilderness, keep your camp clean. Some helpful safety tips are to store all food in vehicles or high in a tree. Plan your meals so there are no leftovers. Cook and store food away from where you are sleeping. Deposit garbage in a bear-resistant refuse container. Don't bury it.



Big Horn Sheep can frequently be seen along Highway 37



Trail Riding at Swisher Lake



Established equine campsites are available in the Kootenai National Forest

While on the trail, avoid surprise encounters by making noise, especially in heavily wooded areas. It is best to travel in a group and look for bear activity, fresh tracks or scat. Always carry a canister of bear spray. Make sure it is an EPA registered bear spray with 1 to 2% capsaicin and related capsaicinoids, has a spray duration of at least 6 seconds and a range of 25 feet.

For information on recreation activities and scenic areas, visit your area U.S. Forest Service Office.