



## Forest Service News Release

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### **West Fork River Access Improvement Project Begins Next Week**

*Limited Parking and Short Delays May Impact Boaters*

**Hamilton, MT, August 11** — The Bitterroot National Forest announced today that work will begin next week on the West Fork River Improvement Project at the West Fork boat launch site. The project which will enhance recreation opportunities and provide education on resource conservation was approved and funded earlier this year by the Ravalli County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC).

The West Fork River access site and boat launch is located just downstream from the West Fork Ranger Station and is a popular site for floaters, fishermen and women, and visitors wanting to enjoy the beauty of the river. Currently, the site includes an outhouse, boat ramp, and parking area. Visitors have also created trails that provide river access upstream and downstream of the boat launch. The project is a partnership between Bitterroot Trout Unlimited, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and the Forest Service.

Beginning next week, volunteers will be installing a new picnic table, benches, and improving the user-created trails to meet ADA accessibility standards. Benches will be located along the trails and will provide river access/viewing both upstream and downstream. A new interpretive sign that will discuss the eight native fish species in the West Fork of the Bitterroot River and the conservation efforts achieved to improve the condition of the native trout, will be installed at a later date. Trapper Creek Job Corps students will also assist with the project.

There will be loads of gravel dumped at the site next week along with a mini excavator and skid steer working at the boat launch. The public should expect short delays in the parking area while volunteers and crews move gravel. There will also be limited parking during the project for vehicles and trailers. Work is expected to be completed by the end of August.

The inspiration for developing this project was initiated by Trout Unlimited as an opportunity to promote river conservation education and to help remember Dave Campbell, a longtime TU member and West Fork District Ranger, for his contributions in natural resource conservation and specifically river conservation. For more information contact the West Fork Ranger District at 406-821-3269 or visit [www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot](http://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot).

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