

# Harriman State Park

**Introduction:** One of the largest parks in Idaho's state park system, Harriman State Park preserves a unique slice of the Gem States' cultural and natural history. The park was once a privately owned ranch of several affluent families – including the Guggenheims, the Harrimans and the C.S. Jones. For more than 70 years, it was a working cattle ranch, wildlife sanctuary and summer retreat. In 1977, after several years of negotiations the property was deeded to the State of Idaho with the provision that it be operated as a state park and wildlife refuge – providing future generations with an opportunity to enjoy a magnificent natural area and its wildlife.

The park is in the center of the 16,000 acre Harriman Wildlife Refuge located in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem encompassing both Idaho Parks and Recreation and Targhee National Forest lands. Elk, moose, trumpeter swans, coyotes, eagles are just a few of the animals that are often seen. Grizzly and black bear are also frequent visitors of the refuge.

The park does not provide an extensive road system, so it is best enjoyed outside your automobile. There are hiking trails that lead to different areas of the park. The six major features in the park are: forests; lakes and ponds; marshes and wetlands; sage meadows; the river; and the Railroad Ranch historic area. Because of the park's focus on wildlife protection, critical waterfowl nesting and wildlife habitat areas are closed at certain times of the year.

Harriman is primarily a day-use area. While you are welcomed to enjoy the park during daylight hours, it is closed to overnight camping. However, overnight lodging is provided through rental of yurts, restored historic buildings, and a conference center.

the Henrys Fork of the Snake River winds for eight miles through the park and is considered by many to be one of the best fly-fishing streams in the United States. Limited to catch and release fly-fishing, this section of the river is often referred to as the "Ranch" and is known for its large but challenging rainbow trout.

**Getting There:** From Ashton, Idaho, take Highway 20 north for about 19 miles to Harriman State Park. Turn left on Green Canyon Rd. Follow Green Canyon road for about 2000 feet to the main park entrance. The entrance is on the right and is well marked with a sign over the road that reads "Harriman State Park of Idaho." This entrance road leads to the visitor center and the various parking lots within the main park.

To get to the Osborne Bridge parking area, take a right turn off of Highway 20 at the Green Canyon Rd. intersection.

To get to Harriman East and the fish pond, continue on Highway 20 past the Green Canyon Rd. intersection for about 5000 feet and turn right on the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway.

Proceed for about 3,000 feet and look for a small dirt road that goes off to the right. It is not well marked. Keep left onto Forest Service Rd. 297 and follow it to the fish pond.

To get to the Sheridan Ranch unit, continue on Green Canyon Rd. past the main entrance to the park. Green Canyon Rd. is also known as Forest Service Rd. 167. Follow Forest Service Rd. 167 for about 11 miles to a point where it turn due north. The Sheridan Ranch unit is almost all the land you can see to the right for the next 4 miles. There are no recreational developments here, but it represents an expansive viewshed from the road out to the edge of Island Park reservoir.

### **Major Features:**

The Landscape: Harriman State Park includes six significant natural and historical environments, each offering a different kind of experience for visitors. (1) The forest environment covers a great deal of the park, especially right near the main entrance. These are dense stands of lodgepole pine forest which represents a dynamic and ever changing natural community. (2) There are lakes and ponds in various parts of the park. Two large lakes impound the waters of Thurmon Creek and provide scenic vistas of water and forest and habitat for wildfowl. There are also numerous smaller ponds found in the park. (3) The marshes and wetlands are some of the most biologically active areas in the park and they provide shelter for numerous forms of wildlife. (4) the sage meadows extent are marked by grey-green sagebrush. These dry meadows are important habitat for elk, sandhill cranes, and an occasional pronghorn antelope. (5) The Railroad Ranch is the historical heart of the park. It was the summer retreat and cattle ranch once enjoyed by the Harriman, Guggenheim and Jones families. (6) The Henrys Fork of the Snake River cuts a majestic swath through the park, providing some of the West's finest fishing and important habitat for moose, trumpeter swans, and other species.

The River: The Henrys Fork of the Snake River is the most significant scenic and natural feature of the park and a great deal of park activities revolve around it. It meanders nine miles through the park meadows and forests. It has its origins at Henrys Lake and at Big Springs. The Buffalo River is also a major tributary. The Henrys Fork watershed encompasses 1.7 million acres and over 3,000 miles of rivers, streams and canals. This watershed is part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the largest intact ecosystem in North America. The watershed is bounded by the Centennial Mountains (part of the Continental Divide) to the north, the Yellowstone Plateau and Teton Range to the east, the Big Hole Mountains to the south, and the Snake River Plain to the west. The scenic qualities of the Henrys Fork cannot be understated. It attracts far more than just anglers to the area. Many visitors come to the area to camp, hike, float, and explore its environs.

The Henrys Fork is both a spring creek and a tailwater, and it exhibits characteristics of each in different places. It's most notable stretch of spring creek water is in Harriman State Park. The Henrys Fork contains one of the largest concentrations of groundwater springs in the world. Big Springs, located 25 miles northeast of the park, is the primary hydrologic source of the river, accounting for 75% of the river's annual flow. Henrys Lake to the north is a secondary hydrologic source for the river. Creeks originating from warm springs that flow into the river help to maintain a temperature just above freezing. As a result, most of the river remains ice-free all winter. The spring-fed Henrys Fork naturally maintains a relatively constant flow year-round. This flow pattern changed in 1938 with the construction of Island Park Dam. The river now flows lower in the winter when irrigation water is stored in Island Park Reservoir, and it has

higher flows in the summer when irrigation water is released.

The Henrys Fork is a tremendous attraction and is best known for its angling opportunities. It is a paradise for trout and the anglers who pursue them. The Henrys Fork's legendary aquatic insect life and crystal clear waters support its claim as being some of the best fly fishing in the world. Trout are particular about where they live. They thrive here because of the high water quality, consistent flows, clean gravels, cold water temperatures, healthy aquatic plants, and abundant insect hatches. Their presence indicates a healthy and vibrant watershed. These insects serve as a food source for numerous species of fish, including rainbow, brown, brook, and Yellowstone cutthroat trout, as well as mountain whitefish. The Henrys Fork through Harriman State Park is managed for fly fishing only. It is only open for fishing during half the year, and in that time probably sees as much traffic as the rest of the river sees year round.

Despite the rumor that the Henrys Fork fishery has been declining in recent years, a recent IDFG fish survey indicates it's again one of North America's finest trout streams. Five-pound trout aren't uncommon, particularly in Henrys Lake, the Box Canyon, Harriman State Park and the Ashton area. Due to the river's rich quality, epic hatches of green, gray, and brown drakes, pale morning duns, salmonflies, and other bugs make the Henrys Fork a popular destination.

**The Park:** At 11,230 acres, Harriman State Park is Idaho's largest state park. Yet, it receives a relatively small number of visitors. About 79,615 per year come to the park for day use and 7,339 use the overnight lodging for an annual total of 86,954. The park offers a number of significant features and facilities for the visitor's enjoyment.

**Osborne Bridge:** The Osborne Bridge area has a boat ramp for put-in and take-out of non-motorized boats. There is a paved road and parking lot with a vault toilet available. The Osborne Bridge provides a place to walk and view the Henrys Fork.

**Sage Flat:** A gravel road leads to the parking lot where a ADA fishing access is provided. The site has a vault toilet, 1 picnic table, and a bench. The John Muir ADA trail, that starts at the visitor center ends here. This site also provides a trailhead for the river trail.

### **Big Springs**

Big Springs flows at approximately 120 million gallons per day and is one of the 40 largest springs in the United States and provides enough water to supply a city of nearly one million people. The water bubbling out of the rocks at Big Springs begins as rain and snow falling on the Madison Plateau, part of the volcanic field that forms Yellowstone National Park. The precipitation flows into the ground and through porous volcanic rock to emerge at Big Springs. The clear waters remain at 52° Fahrenheit year-round and are the spawning grounds for large rainbow trout migrating upstream from Island Park Reservoir. Fishing has been prohibited in Big Springs since 1919 due to its importance as a spawning area. The historic Johnny Sack Cabin is located at Big Springs and is open for tours. Tours run from July 4 through Labor Day. There is a ½ mile ADA trail available. Big Springs is a National Natural Landmark designated in August 1980.

**Silver Lake:** The Silver Lake area includes the park office and visitor center where there are improved restrooms. Closer to Silver Lake is a gravel road that leads to two yurts with picnic tables and fire rings with a vault toilet nearby. The main gravel access road has three parking pull-outs and one of these has a nearby picnic table. Several park trails can be accessed here.

**Ranchview:** A gravel road leads to the park's largest parking lot. There are vault toilets here that have the extra feature of sinks. There is a short ADA trail here with interpretive panels. There are six picnic tables available. A group shelter is under construction and should be available soon. This area provides great views of Railroad Ranch and the vast meadows that surround the Henrys Fork here. A horseback riding concession is provided in this area.

**Railroad Ranch:** There are 13 significant buildings here, both historic and contemporary. There are improved restrooms for the public provided in the Boys House. There are six picnic tables scattered around the area.

Jones House – Charles Jones built this summer house in 1955 to accommodate his family and friends when they visited the Railroad Ranch. The most modern structure in the ranch complex, the Jones House featured six bedrooms, four baths and numerous spacious cabinets. It is not open to the public.

Boys House – The Boys House is the oldest building on the site, the original structure dating back to 1902. It was obtained by Mary Harriman just before 1917 and used as quarters for her “boys,” Averell and Roland. The downstairs once contained two large sitting rooms, a kitchen area, three bedrooms and a bath. The upstairs was remodeled in the 1950's with rows of rafters and supports to help reinforce the roof against the snow load. The downstairs was remodeled in 1995 as an educational and meeting center. The meeting room has riverfront views. It is popular for wedding receptions and meetings. The Boys house is equipped with tables, chairs, projection screen, and a flat screen monitor. Restrooms, sink, and counter space are in the lobby. It is available for rent for events with a maximum of 70 people. It is only available for these uses June through September. When it is not being rented for an event, restrooms for regular park visitors are located inside the Boys House.

Dining Cottage – The Dining Cottage was used by the Harrimans for guest housing, but primarily for meal preparation and dining. The Harrimans brought their own domestic staff for their visits, and the bedrooms and bath upstairs were provided for their use. The Dining Cottage is open to the public on guided tours and contains furnishings left by Roland and Gladys Harriman.

Harriman Cottage – The seasonal residence of Roland and Gladys Harriman, this building was constructed on the site of Mary Harriman's original cottage in 1947. It features a large front room with an immense stone fireplace, two bedrooms with private baths and fireplaces, and a separate tackle room for the gear of the avid fly fisherman and hunter. The interior furnishings were those left in the house in 1977. The house is open to the public on guided tours.

Honeymoon Hotel – Both the Guggenheim and Harriman families brought domestic help from the east for their summer visits. Solomon Guggenheim would house his servants in this building,

which was once called Hotel d'Bum. When it was remodeled in 1951 to house a newly married ranch employee and his wife, it was appropriately renamed the Honeymoon Hotel. It is not open to the public.

Ranch Foreman's House – While used as a residence, this 1917 house has been remodeled numerous times, and it has sheltered many different ranch employees. It is not open to the public.

Bunk House – The bunkhouse most often served as the residence for seasonal ranch employees. Very few stayed through the long winter, but in addition to the foremen, those remaining were allowed to bring their families and live in the bunkhouse, cookhouse or Honeymoon Hotel. The bunkhouse was remodeled in 1978 to accommodate workers from the Youth Conservation Corp. The bunk house is furnished with two bathrooms and four bedrooms with a mix of queen and single beds with linens provided. A woodstove and game table provide a great setting for relaxing evenings. The bunk house is available for rent year round for a maximum of nine people.

Cookhouse – Several cookhouses were constructed over the years to feed the hungry ranch hands. This cookhouse, built in 1949, is complete with kitchen, dining area for 40, rooms for the cook and an upstairs apartment for the wintering families. The kitchen was remodeled in 1978 to conform to health regulations and is now a usable cooking facility for large groups. It contains all the utensils, appliances, and dining space for group meal preparation. The cookhouse is available for rent year round for a maximum of four people.

Cattle Foreman's House – The cattle foreman's house, long known as the McGarry House, was built in the mid-1950's. It had originally been used for employee housing. It is a furnished three bedroom home, complete with a kitchen, and a full bath. Two bedrooms provide queen-sized beds, and a bunk bed is found in the third. Hand-painted kitchen tiles and a hardwood floor highlight the living area. This house is available for rent year-round for a maximum occupancy of six people.

Ranch Office – The Railroad Ranch operation was overseen by a ranch manager who often worked or lived in this building. The furnishings left to the State included a large steel safe and a steel desk with tables dating back to the 1950's. Ranch records dating back to the creation of the Island Park Land and Cattle Company were kept in the office and are now part of the park archives. It is not open to the public.

Ranch Manager's House – This building originally served as shareholder Silas Eccles' clubhouse, but in 1921, the building was remodeled as a residence for ranch manager James Anderson. Between 1929 and 1948, it was used strictly as overflow housing for the guests of Solomon Guggenheim. In later years, managers Dan Clark, Jr. and Ben Meese resided in the house and had it modernized. It is a rustic log cabin that can accommodate eight persons. The furnished kitchen, knotty pine living room, and antique dining table makes this a charming place to relax at the historic Railroad Ranch. Each bedroom has a double bed with linens provided. The enclosed front porch provides an excellent place to watch the birds and wildlife on the Henrys Fork. It is available for rent year-round.

Dormitory and Dining Hall – Harriman State Park’s Dormitory offers a unique setting for large groups. The two story dormitory has partitioned rooms with bunk beds. Guests must provide their own sleeping bags, pillows, towels, and toiletries. A large woodstove makes the dormitory a cozy option for your next gathering. The nearby dining hall has a fully equipped commercial grade kitchen and large dining area. The dormitory is available year-round for a maximum of 38 people.

Scovel Center and Cabins – The Scovel Education Center provides a kitchen and conference center for 24 people. The conference center has tables and chairs, a large flat screen TV, two restrooms, and a woodstove. This facility is ideal for a business retreat and or wedding. Clustered around the conference center are ten furnished cabins with linens provided on a variety of single and queen beds. Each cabin has bed(s), a desk, and a bathroom. There is a large courtyard with outdoor seating and fire pit. The conference center has a catering kitchen equipped with a refrigerator, stove, sinks and microwave. Each cabin can accommodate two people maximum. At a minimum, 5 cabins have to be rented. The center is available for rent June through October

**Bing Lempke Parking Area (Last Chance Fisherman Access Site):** This area is located at the “north gate entrance” to the park. Although, these facilities are operated by the Forest Service, they are situated immediately adjacent to Harriman State Park property and provides access to the Henrys Fork with park property immediately across the river and access to the park’s east gate trail. This area has a paved road and large parking lot with improved restrooms and a dump station. A small fishing dock is available at the edge of the river.

**Harriman East:** Harriman East is an area of undeveloped park lands along the Henrys Fork that are “east” of Highway 20. For the most part the area is covered with sagebrush meadows with the exception of the forested area around Fish Pond. The significant feature here is the “Fish Pond” which is the only lake in the park open to general fishing. There is a small hand launch boat ramp here, but no other improvements. There is an area of National Forest lands adjacent to park property and the Henrys Fork that is being used by many as a dispersed camping area. Access to the Harriman East area is via gravel roads off of the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway. These roads are not well marked.

**Sheridan Ranch:** The single largest block of undeveloped park land is the Sheridan Ranch unit. This unit is separated from the rest of the park and consists of about 6,000 acres. It is located about 8 miles northwest of the Railroad Ranch unit of the park. The southernmost edge of the unit is densely forested with lodgepole pine forest. Most of the remainder to the north is covered with sage-brush meadows with the wetlands of Sheridan Creek and Icehouse Creek bisecting the area. The Sheridan Ranch unit has about 1 ½ miles of frontage on Island Park Reservoir. The park property also includes a few peninsulas that extend into the reservoir on the south side. There are no developments or facilities on the property other than a few old derelict ranch buildings. Most of the unit has livestock fencing around it and the primary use that the park puts it to is a livestock grazing lease. The open space of the unit provides great wildlife habitat. There is a “so-called” Forest Service recreation site on the south east side of the property that has a boat ramp on the reservoir and a more-or-less abandoned developed campground. The area has become popular for dispersed camping and OHV use which has the potential of encroaching on the park property.

**Geology:** The geology of the Harriman State Park area is volcanic in origins. The first big eruption was the Island Park eruption which occurred 2.1 million years ago. Harriman State Park is in the Island Park Caldera. A caldera forms when the pressure of rising magma pushes upward causing the overlying rocks to dome and crack. Then boiling magma violently explodes through the cracks spewing hot volcanic ash into the air. As the magma erupts, the dome collapses and forms a large bowl-shaped crater or caldera. The eruptions create a broad crater-like area when the top of the volcano collapses. After the collapse, more eruptions partially fill the caldera.

The Island Park Caldera is one of the world's largest calderas, with approximate dimensions of 36 by 40 miles. Its ashfall is the source of the Huckleberry Ridge Tuff that is found from Southern California to the Mississippi River near St. Louis. This super-eruption of approximately 600 cubic miles produced 2,500 times as much ash as the 1980 Mount St. Helens eruption. The Island Park Caldera has the smaller and younger Henrys Fork Caldera nested inside it. This caldera is the source of the Mesa Falls Tuff. It was formed 1.3 million years ago in an eruption of more than 67 cubic miles. The two nested calderas share the same rim on their western sides, but the older Island Park Caldera is much larger and more oval and extends well into Yellowstone National Park. The Island Park Caldera is sometimes referred to as the First Phase Yellowstone Caldera or the Huckleberry Ridge Caldera.

To the southwest of the Island Park Caldera lies the Snake River Plain, which was formed by a succession of older calderas marking the path of the Yellowstone hotspot. The Yellowstone hotspot is a belt of volcanic rocks that began to erupt about 15 million years ago and now stretches 400 miles from the Idaho-Oregon border to the Yellowstone Plateau. The Yellowstone Hotspot first created calderas near the Nevada Idaho border about 17 million years ago. Since then, the North American plate has slid to the southwest, creating a caldera to the north near the intersection of Mesa Falls Scenic Byway and Highway 20. Further to the northeast, the youngest of the hotspot calderas is within Yellowstone National Park.

Harriman State Park is situated on the floor of the smaller Henrys Fork Caldera. This volcano's last eruption is believed to have occurred 650,000 years ago. The remnant 18-mile-long, 23-mile-wide caldera is one of the most symmetrical found on earth. Thurmon Ridge forms a portion of the western rim of this formation. Most of the park occupies the floor of this nearly flat crater surface. This underground "hot spot" of volcanic activity is believed to have moved northeastward through the region to Yellowstone. Currently there is no volcanic or thermal activity in the Island Park area.

**Ecosystems and Plant Communities:** Harriman State Park is at an elevation of about 6,210 feet. The park contains seven ecosystems/plant communities, including the lodgepole pine forest, lakes and ponds, marches and wetlands, montane sagebrush steppe, meadow/prairie, riparian and river.

Lodgepole Pine Forest: Forests within the park cover approximately 1,000 acres. Within these forests the most common tree is the lodgepole pine, which makes up about 80% of the forest. These pines are tall, straight and usually grow in very dense stands. Lodgepole pine forests are found throughout the Railroad Ranch and Harriman East sections of the park. Interspersed with the pine are occasional climax forest of Engelmann spruce and Douglas fir. These forests are found primarily along the west side of Thurmon Ridge. Other tree species found in this forest include Rocky Mountain juniper and aspen.

The lodgepole pine forest has a nice undergrowth of Rocky Mountain maple, wild strawberry, mountain ash, cow parsnip, fireweed, wild rose, and saskatoon, The forest floor is covered with forbs such as mules ear (wyethia), penstemon, purple aster, golden aster, glacier lily, hooked spur violet, heartleaf arnica, Indian paintbrush, salisfy, goatsbeard, snow berry, starry false Solomon's seal, camas, lupine, and a variety of grasses.

The keynote species of the park is the lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) as this species makes up more than 90 percent of the trees in the area, producing a uniform forest of trees, nearly the same age. The lodgepole pine at Harriman State Park is the Rocky Mountain subspecies (*Latifolia*). It is a thin and narrow-crowned evergreen tree that is 130 to 160 feet high and can achieve up to 7 feet in diameter at chest height. Although trucks in this thickness are rare in the Rocky Mountains. The crown is rounded and the top of the tree is flattened. In dense forests, the tree has a slim, conical crown. The dark and mostly shiny needles are pointed narrow and 1 ½ to 3 inches long in bundles of two. Many populations of the Rocky Mountain subspecies have serotinous cones. This means that the cones are closed and must be exposed to high temperatures, such as from forest fires, in order to open and release their seeds. The variation in their serotiny has been correlated with wildfires and mountain pine beetle attacks. Therefore, lodgepole pine is a fire-dependent species, requiring wildfires to maintain healthy populations of diverse ages. Excessive wildfire prevention disrupts the fire ecology.

The lodgepole pine forest is very uniform due to soil temperature, forest fires and insects. The soil at this elevation (more than 6,000 feet) and latitude (more than 44 degrees north) is relatively cool, restricting the types of trees and plants that will grow in the area. For centuries the lodgepole pine forests of eastern Idaho have been swept by frequent bark beetle infestations. When these natural cycles occur, new forest growth over large areas begins at the same time. This process produces stands of trees that are all about the same age.

The presence of the mountain pine beetle has tremendous influence over the lodgepole pine forest. These small beetles burrow into the living tissues of the trunk, eventually cutting off the circulation of nutrients between roots and branches. If left unchecked, the beetle can kill mature trees within a years of infestation. Beetles hatched in a dying tree then fly on to infect healthy ones, and the process is repeated.

No effective large-scale measures have been found to combat the beetles. Fortunately, trees smaller than five inches in diameter are not usually attacked by the pine beetle. Female bark beetles from an infected tree fly to a healthy one and burrow egg galleries in the trees's trunk. Living trees are usually attacked in mid-summer. By late fall, some of the tree's needles will change from green to yellow-brown. By the next summer, the tree is almost completely dead, and the needles have turned red-brown. Newly hatched beetles from the dead tree fly off the attack other trees.

The forest will not be destroyed by this. The death of the trees will set in motion the processes of forest succession. Two results could occur: (1) The accumulating littler of dead wood could be the source of a forest fire. Heat from the fire would release new pine seeds from the cones, with a resulting new crop of young lodgepole pines; or (2) if left to decay, the dead trees will open the forest floor to sunlight and set in motion a decades-long cycle of growth and change.

Sun tolerant species such as aspen would be the first trees to grow in the original forest area. The shade provided by the aspen would then allow the more shade-tolerant pines or Douglas firs to become established, creating a mixed transitional forest. In 40 to 50 years, the lodgepole pines or Douglas firs would eventually crowd out the aspen and establish a climax



forest until the next fire or insect plague.

Lakes and ponds: The four largest lakes within the park are all man-made. These are Island Park Reservoir, Golden Lake, Silver Lake and Fish Pond. Island Park Reservoir is a roughly 10-mile-long and 2-mile-wide, shallow reservoir occupying the southern half of the Sheridan unit northwest of the Railroad Ranch. This reservoir is fed by the Henrys Fork and several smaller streams including Sheridan Creek and Ice House Creek, which run through the Sheridan Ranch unit. The dams that form Golden and Silver Lakes were constructed for private fishing. These lakes range from a half-mile (Golden) to a mile (Silver) in length. Both lakes are fed by the numerous springs and drainages that flow to Thurmon Creek. Fish Pond, located in the Harriman East area, is also spring-fed and plays host to a variety of aquatic plants and fish.

The lakes and ponds are home to many forms of wildlife. Abundant aquatic vegetation makes the lakes favored feeding spots for waterfowl, and marshy areas along the shores provide cover for nesting. Golden Lake and Silver Lake provide a sheltered haven for the trumpeter swan. In addition to waterfowl, the lakes and ponds provide habitat for water-loving mammals. Muskrats are abundant, and occasional beaver, otter and mink may be seen as well.

Any lake or pond is a temporary feature in the landscape. Some small ponds in the park were formed by small depressions created by a block of melting ice left by the glaciers that once covered this area. Within a few hundred years the marsh will become a forest. A young pond begins to fill with life almost as soon as it forms. As plants and animals die, their remains form a fertile layer at the bottom that gradually thickens and becomes soil. When the pond is nearly filled in, it becomes a wet meadow, damp and boggy, choked with water loving plants. As the site of the pond becomes drier, the rushes and cattails are replaced by grasses and sedges. Eventually seeds from nearby trees are carried into the meadow and take root. Within a few years, almost all traces of the original pond have vanished.

Marshes and wetlands: Due to the abundance of springs and the shallow water table, there are numerous wetland areas found throughout the park. While small wetlands are located throughout the park, the largest marshes are found on the fringes of the two lakes and on the fringes of Thurmon Creek and Henrys Fork. Many of these areas are criss-crossed with small channels of water, creating islands and bays filled with lush marsh grasses, cattails and bulrushes.

Several trails lead into or near the marshes. Thurmon Creek overlook, along the trail to Golden Lake provides vistas of Thurmon Creek flowing through the center of its wide marsh. The marshlands along the Henrys Fork can be viewed along the river trail, and at several other locations in the park.

Wet and boggy in early summer, drier and meadow-like in late summer, the wetlands of Harriman State Park are essential to the existence of many forms of wildlife. In fact, these low and poorly drained areas of saturated soil are literally teeming with life – from micro-organisms to ducks, geese and cranes – providing one of nature’s most fascinating ecological displays.

During the spring and early summer, Thurmon Creek and Henrys Fork flow at full capacity, spreading life-giving water throughout their marshy fringes. At this time of year, these areas provide prime cover for nesting waterfowl. In late summer and fall, stream flows slacken, the water table drops, and many of the wetlands dry out. At that time, the meadows become favored locations for the elk, who then graze on the grasses and sedges.

Sandhill cranes find the wet meadows to be prime nesting and feeding areas. Their unusual courtship dance is one of nature’s most dramatic rituals.

The marsh is an energy machine! The marsh ecosystem is a complex community of living things, each dependent on the others for food and energy. Every living organism in the marsh uses the energy that comes from the sun and passes it on in a continuing cycle. Green plants capture energy from the sun and use it to produce glucose, the basic food of life. Animals cannot capture solar energy, but obtain it instead from plants. Plant-eating animals, both large and small, obtain their energy from the plants. As energy is passed from one consumer to another, some of it is used to maintain the processes of life, while some is stored. Meat-eating organisms initially obtain energy from plant eaters, but may in turn be eaten by larger meat eaters, including man. Even dead plants and animals can supply energy to the insects and bacteria that decompose organic matter. The decomposed matter then transmits minerals and chemical compounds to nourish plants, and the cycle starts all over again.

Montane Sagebrush Steppe: Sagebrush and rabbitbrush are common in the dryer sections of the park. These plants are the indicator species of the montane sagebrush steppe. This plant community is located primarily along the east and west sides of Highway 20 and to a greater extent on the Sheridan Ranch unit. Many of these areas have porous volcanic bedrock covered by gravelly soil where water is quickly absorbed. These areas can be easily identified by their lack of surface tributary streams and a presence of big sagebrush.

The montane sagebrush steppe provides a habitat for many kinds of wildlife. The tall, bushy sage provides protection for small, burrowing mammals such as the pocket gopher, as well as upland game birds like the sage grouse and the sharp-tailed grouse. Deer, antelope and elk consider the sage and its associated plants as good eating.

Other plants that can be found in this community include wheat grass, needle grass, bitterbrush, Idaho fescue, and service berry.

Meadow/prairie: The meadows north of the Railroad Ranch are inhabited with a mix of native grass species and introduced agricultural species. Cultivated crops and past grazing practices have replaced much of the native grass and steppe communities. These areas have also experienced a marked increase in the spread of invasive noxious weeds. These meadows almost always provide a spectacular summer display of wildflowers. Including many unusual and beautiful species. Plants such as camas, larkspur and mule's ear (wythia) are commonly found here.

Riparian: The riparian or streamside habitats are primarily located along Thurmon Creek and the Henrys Fork. Thurmon Creek flows from springs located along Thurmon Ridge but also receives water from springs and groundwater. Biologically, it is highly productive water and supports an array of organisms. The Henrys Fork has also created significant riparian areas along its banks and on depositional islands. These diverse array of riparian plant associations are found to support a variety of wildlife. These riparian areas are very fragile and quite susceptible to change as a result of human activities and influence. Typical species of this plant community include cottonwood, alder, willow, bull rush, cattail, and sedges.

River: The Henrys Fork River is a very unique ecosystem. The reach of the Henrys Fork through Harriman State Park supports one of the most popular rainbow trout fisheries in the world. Although rainbow trout are not native to the Henrys Fork, this fishery is currently supported solely by natural reproduction. But in this ecosystem, the primary native fish species of concern

is the Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Wild populations of this fish exist primarily in the Teton River drainage, a few in Henry's Lake and its tributaries, and a few isolated headwater tributaries elsewhere in the watershed.

The Henrys Fork high water quality, consistent flows, clean gravels, cold water temperatures, healthy aquatic plants, and abundant insect hatches would seem like indicators of a healthy and vibrant watershed. Some may even refer to the Henrys Fork as a pristine ecosystem. However, because it is a working river, that may not always be true. The Henrys Fork has "wild" populations of nonnative rainbow trout, cutthroat/rainbow hybrid trout, brown trout, and brook trout. These "non-natives" compete for food, shelter, and space with the native Yellowstone cutthroat.

So the Henrys Fork River Ecosystem is far from being pristine. But, its water and marsh banks provide habitat for some of the region's most important wildlife. The river supports a wide variety of life such as trumpeter swans and other waterfowl. Mammals such as beaver, otters, and even moose abound here.

The Henrys Fork is one of America's greatest trout streams. This rainbow trout fishery is fished over 150,000 days a year and contributes more than 800 jobs and 30 million dollars to the local economy. However, this has not always been the case, the Henrys Fork was once the exclusive domain of the Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Over the last century the Yellowstone cutthroat have been displaced by the introduced rainbow and brook trout and directly impacted by projects removing chubs and whitefish which also removed cutthroat. Culverts, dams, and diversions have blocked spawning migrations and disrupted life history patterns. Roads and grazing have impacted some streams by adding sediment and affected habitat. The disappearance of cutthroat from a few streams may be tolerable but the decline is widespread. Just like rainbow trout have desirable traits so does the cutthroat. They are easily caught and take a fly wonderfully. While the Henrys Fork will remain a rainbow trout fishery, work is underway elsewhere to promote and preserve Yellowstone cutthroat because cutthroat are the fish best adapted to survive long-term in these waters.

## **Wildlife:**

Mammals: The mammals present in the park include: mountain lion, moose, mule deer, whitetail deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, black bear, grizzly bear, badger, skunk, raccoon, bobcat, wolverine, coyote, wolf, river otters, muskrat, mink, beaver, skunk, fisher, weasel, red squirrel, Columbian ground squirrel, porcupine, yellow-bellied marmot, chipmunk, red fox, fisher, American marten, little brown bat, hoary bat, big brown bat, deer mouse, woodrat, pika, snowshoe hare, cottontail rabbit, jackrabbit.

Moose are readily seen at the park. The appearance of the moose is, to say the least, unique and has inspired a variety of equally unique nicknames. Moose frequent the marshes, streams and lakes of the park. Long legs allow easier movement through water or snow and give access to food above the reach of other browsers. To reach the tops of smaller trees, moose may straddle the tree between its front legs. Walking forward, the moose will push the tree until the food is within reach. Moose may submerge for up to 60 seconds and use its elongated snout to reach underwater plants. Special flaps in the nose are used to seal off the nostrils. At Harriman, moose are most often seen around the shoreline of Silver Lake and near the Henrys Fork.

Birds: The birds present in the park include: raven, common flicker, meadow lark, red-winged

blackbird, yellow-headed blackbird, western tanager, osprey, American kestrel, Canada goose, western grebe, double crested cormorant, common loon, mallard, bufflehead, gadwall, bald eagle, golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, white pelican, turkey vulture, night hawk, pheasant, great egret, trumpeter swan, burrowing owl, great horned owl, great blue heron, American dipper, cedar waxwing, violet-green swallow, peregrine falcon, grouse, dove, kildeer, Clark's nutcracker, Steller's jay, chickadee, sandhill crane, longbilled curlew, common snipe, and sandpiper.

The park is best known for its resident population of trumpeter swans. Therefore, the trumpeter swan (*Cynus buccinator*) is the keynote species. The trumpeter swan is a species of swan found in North America. It is the heaviest living bird native to North America. It is also the largest extant species of waterfowl with a wingspan that may exceed 10 feet. By 1933, fewer than 70 wild trumpeters were known to exist, and extinction seemed imminent, until aerial surveys discovered a Pacific population of several thousand trumpeters around Alaska's Copper River. Careful reintroductions by wildlife agencies and the Trumpeter Swan Society gradually restored the North American wild population to over 46,000 birds by 2010.

Adult trumpeter swans usually measure 4 ½ to 5 ½ feet long. The weight of adult birds is typically 15 to 30 pounds. It is one of the heaviest living birds or animals capable of flight. The trumpeter swan's wingspan ranges from 6 to 8 feet. The adult trumpeter swan is all white in plumage. The cygnets (young swans) of the trumpeter swan have light grey plumage and pinkish legs, and gain their white plumage after about a year. The bird has upright posture and generally swims with a straight neck. The trumpeter swan has a large, wedge-shaped black bill that can, in some cases, be minimally lined with salmon-pink coloration around the mouth. The bill is up to twice the length of a Canada goose's bill and is the largest of any waterfowl. The legs are gray-pink in color, though in some birds can appear yellowish gray to even black.

Trumpeter swans are loud and somewhat musical creatures, with their cry sounding similar to a trumpet, which gave the bird its name. This loud trumpet-like call can be heard during all seasons at the park.

Their breeding habitat is large shallow ponds, undisturbed lakes, pristine wetlands and wide slow rivers, and marshes in northwestern and central North America. They also prefer nesting sites with enough space for them to have enough surface water for them to take off, as well as accessible food, shallow, unpolluted water, and little or no human disturbance. Harriman State Park is a perfect place for trumpeter swans as it provides all these features.

Harriman's trumpeters are comprised of two distinct swan groups. The Tri-State flock includes year-round residents of the Greater Yellowstone Area, including Harriman. These birds find small, usually isolated bodies of water to nest and raise their young, such as Silver and Golden Lakes. In recent years, swan numbers in this group have declined. In contrast, Trumpeter Swans from the Canadian flocks have increased and each winter, migrate to the Island Park area. Swan numbers at Harriman may swell from a half dozen resident birds to over a thousand. Such large numbers put the swans at risk due to potential disease outbreaks and extreme weather conditions. Swan managers are seeking ways to encourage migrating swans to make use of additional wintering areas further south.

Typically several dozen unmated swans frequent Silver Lake during the summer. Each year a few mated pairs nest along the park's ponds, producing three to ten cygnets. These birds are very vulnerable to human intrusion and require isolation during the nesting period. As a result, the park has established seasonal restrictions to protect the trumpeter swan.

During the winter months, as Silver and Golden Lakes freeze over, trumpeter swans in the park migrate a short distance to the Henrys Fork. Here they are joined by several hundred

swans from Canada and the Red Rock Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Montana. The park is located within the seasonal migration range of these birds. Unfortunately the vegetation along the Henrys Fork has been adversely impacted due to this influx. As a result, hazing and relocation efforts have been undertaken to reduce swan numbers or to alter their habits.

Another noteworthy bird in the park is the sandhill crane (*Antigone canadensis*). This stately bird with a large body, long neck and long legs can occasionally be seen in the meadows and wetlands of the park. Standing four to five feet tall and with six to seven foot wingspan, sandhill cranes can't hide very well. They are usually gray with white cheeks and a red forehead. Many appear reddish-brown most of the year from preening themselves with vegetation and mud,

The major conservation concern for eastern Idaho's cranes is loss of their staging habitat, where crane families gather to feed and store up energy before their long migration to New Mexico. Harriman's sandhill cranes stage in nearby wheat and barley fields. The sight and sound of hundreds of sandhill cranes returning to their nighttime roosts in the park's wetlands after gleaning the grain fields is an awesome experience to encounter.

Reptiles and Amphibians: The reptiles and amphibians present in the park include: tiger salamander, western toad, leopard frog, sagebrush lizard, skink, alligator lizard, rubber boa, racer, gopher snake, garter snake, and western painted turtle.

Fish: The fish present in the park include: Yellowstone cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, rainbow/cutthroat hybrid, brown trout, brook trout, and mountain whitefish. There are also kokanee in Island Park Reservoir and its tributaries.

Although once widespread, Yellowstone cutthroat trout numbers have declined to the point where the subspecies has been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Genetically pure, Yellowstone cutthroat occupy only 10 percent of the streams where they were historically found. These fish are the only trout native to the Henrys Fork watershed. The decline of the Yellowstone cutthroat trout was caused primarily by hybridization with rainbow trout, competition with brook trout and the degradation and fragmentation of habitat.

**Cultural History:** In 1966 an archaeological reconnaissance of the Railroad Ranch was prepared by the Idaho State University Museum. This study identified thirty-seven prehistoric campsites dispersed throughout the ranch property. Several of these sites were believed to be Clovis campsites that date 11,000 to 11,500 years ago. The prehistoric people that lived at Railroad Ranch were likely hunters, fishers and gatherers living in small communities and moving from one location to another with each passing season. Numerous artifacts including spearheads, arrowheads, broken utensils and other relics have been found along the banks of the Henrys Fork.

Bands of Indians hunted herds of game that abounded at the end of the last ice age. As changes in the environment led to the extinction of many of the species that they hunted, more reliance was placed on the gathering of plants. Small groups of families left winter villages along the upper Snake River and followed the developing vegetation into the mountains during the spring and summer. In the fall the Indians began to hunt mountain sheep and other game, following the animals down to winter range near their camps. Small and large game, fish, berries, lodgepole pine and other resources were harvested seasonally. One of the resources most sought after in the reaches of the Henrys Fork was the American bison or buffalo. This resource would attract tribes of several ethnic backgrounds to the region. Aside from food, one of the most important resource to the Indians was obsidian, the raw material for many of their tools. Targhee

obsidian was traded widely throughout the local area and beyond.

For hundreds of years, the Shoshone, Bannock, Lemhi and Tukuarika - largely nomadic people inhabited the Island Park area in the summer to hunt, fish and gather roots and berries. Typically, these people spent the winter in the lower elevations of the Snake River Plain. The Henrys Fork was part of the route of the prehistoric Great Bannock Trail between the Snake River Plains and the Yellowstone country. For the most part, this trail follows the Henrys Fork and passes just north of Harriman State Park of Idaho.

When the first white explorers and trappers arrived early in the nineteenth century, they found mounted bands of Shoshone and Bannock Indians who crossed the mountains of the Targhee to hunt bison on the northwestern Great Plains. The first explorers also found groups of horseless Shoshone scattered through the mountains, gathering plants and hunting. These Indians they called the Sheepeaters. Generally, the Shoshone and Bannock tribes subsisted as hunters and gatherers, traveling during the spring and summer seasons, collecting foods for use during the winter months. They hunted wild game, fished the region's abundant and bountiful streams and rivers, and collected native plants and roots such as the camas bulb. Buffalo served as the most significant source of food and raw material for the tribes. After the introduction of horses during the 1700s, hundreds of Idaho Indians of various tribal affiliations would ride into Montana on cooperative buffalo hunts. The last great hunt of this type occurred in 1864, signaling the end of a traditional way of life.

The Nez Perce people were also known to be occasional inhabitants here. They had engaged in hunting and raiding while in the region. One of their hunting trails was followed by Chief Joseph's band of Nez Perce during the Nez Perce War of 1877. Chief Joseph and his band were on the run and evading U.S. Army troops under the command of General Oliver O. Howard. The Nez Perce band followed the trails through Montana and into Idaho at Bannock Pass and then turned eastward and headed toward Henrys Lake. Howard's route paralleled them to the north in Montana on the other side of the Continental Divide. Howard hoped to intercept them at Camas Creek near Dubois, Idaho. But he was a day late.

Howard marched to Camas Meadows on August 19, 1877. The Nez Perce had departed earlier that day, continuing eastward. Howard set up camp there that night, calling it Camp Callaway, and took "great pains" to "cover the camp" with pickets in every direction.

The exceptional precautions Howard had taken for the protection of Camp Callaway were observed by Nez Perce scouts. Upon returning to their own camp, they reported what they had seen to the chiefs. They decided to carry out a raid with the objective of putting Howard's cavalry on foot.

About 4:00 a.m., several Nez Perce dismounted and crept among the picketed horses to cut them loose. Then two things happened simultaneously. As the mounted column approached the soldier's camp, a sentry shouted, "Who goes there?" At the same moment, a foot scout named Otskai accidentally discharged his gun in the midst of the camp. Thus, an alarm was sounded from two places before many horses had been released from their picket lines. However, two hundred mules were freed and the Indians concentrated upon stampeding them northward.

General Howard mustered a strong force in order to pursue the raiders and recover the stock. Within minutes, three companies of cavalry were assembled. Under the command of Major Sanford, nearly 150 horsemen were galloping northward in pursuit of the raiders, who had several miles' head start. In addition to the mules, about 20 horses were missing as well.

The rear guard of the Nez Perce detected the horsemen and set up an ambush eight miles north of Camp Callaway. Several warriors continued driving the mules on to camp, and others deployed among hillocks of black lava and broken terrain dotted with aspen trees and sagebrush. A few Nez Perce deployed in a thin skirmish line in a grassy meadow about a half mile wide. The meadow was bordered on the opposite side by a lava ridge 18 feet high and 500 to 600 feet long. Sanford and his three companies took up positions behind the ridge and dismounted to return long-distance fire from the Nez Perce.

The distance between these lines was too great for effective marksmanship, but when a shot struck Lt. Benson in the hip the soldiers discovered that the Indians in the meadow were serving as a decoy, while others had been creeping forward on both flanks to attack the troops. Hence, Sanford ordered a bugler to call a retreat. Captain Randolph Norwood with 50 men, however, declined to obey immediately the order to retreat, but instead backtracked slowly to a strong position where he was forced by the encircling Nez Perce to halt, establish defensive positions, and fight it out. The other two companies had abandoned him. For the next two to four hours the two sides sniped at each other.

Meanwhile, Howard proceeded to the battle site with reinforcements. He found the two retreating cavalry companies. Major Sanford professed ignorance as to the location and fate of Captain Norwood. Howard pushed forward and, mid-afternoon, came upon Norwood and his men crouching in their lava rock rifle pits located a few rods apart along the top and on the edges of a series of ridges that enclosed a protected area for their horses. The Indians melted away and the battle was over.

The U.S. Army had one dead, two mortally wounded and six to nine wounded. The Nez Perce had only one or two wounded. The Nez Perce were disappointed that the spoils of their raid had been mostly mules, but the loss crippled Howard's mobility. Howard had failed to defeat the Nez Perce on several occasions and now, after the battle, he failed to pursue them aggressively.

Later, the Nez Perce fought a holding action on Targhee Creek against Howard's troops and tradition has it that a Bannock chieftain allied with Chief Joseph was killed. There are some accounts that say that a distortion of his name Tyee, was given later to the creek and the Targhee Forest.

After learning that the Nez Perce were headed into the wilderness of Yellowstone National Park, Howard called a halt to the chase and rested for several days at Henrys Lake. Meanwhile, Howard's superior General Philip Sheridan was collecting more than one thousand experienced soldiers and Indian scouts from many tribes to defeat the Nez Perce when they emerged from Yellowstone.

The Fort Hall Reservation had been established by an Executive Order in 1867 and the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes were forcibly moved there. Later the Northern Shoshone bands were also forcibly moved to Fort Hall. The Shoshone-Bannock treaty with the United States was executed in 1868.

**History:** There is some speculation that the first white person to travel in Island Park was John Colter in 1807 or 1808. Andrew Henry traversed the Island Park area along the river in 1810. He and a group of trappers journeyed south from Montana over Raynolds Pass to the lake that bears Henry's name. The group followed the lake's outlet, the Henrys Fork, about 50 miles, through an area now occupied by the Island Park Reservoir. Near the future town of St. Anthony, Henry and his small party of trappers built winter quarters that became known as Fort Henry. Wilson Price

Hunt lead a party of Astorians, employees of the American Fur Company through Idaho in 1811. He passed through Fort Henry on his way to the mouth of the Columbia River. Wilson Price Hunt named the North Fork of the Snake and its lake headwaters for Henry. In the next 50 years of this fur trading era, an army of fur trappers and “mountain men” took hundreds of thousands of beaver from the lakes and streams of this area.

The Raynolds expedition passed through the area in 1860. It was headed by William F. Raynolds and guided by famous mountain man Jim Bridger. Congress appropriated \$60,000 and instructed Raynolds to find the best way for a road and/or railroad to the plains of Montana and the Idaho mines. They explored Jackson Hole, Wyoming, but were turned back, passed through the Island Park country and discovered Raynolds pass which he recommended as the route into Montana because it had a grade of less than 50 feet to the mile. It was 1,500 feet lower than South pass and so level it was difficult to locate the point where the waters divided.

Gilman Sawtell and Levi Wurtz came to Henry’s Lake in 1867 to ranch cattle for the Montana Gold Rush towns of Virginia City, Bannack, and Helena. The flies on the marshy shores of Henrys Lake proved to be too heavy for cattle but the two entrepreneurs quickly realized they could market Island Park’s abundant elk, moose, antelope, and bighorn sheep to hungry miners in Montana. In the cooler months, they could harvest trout from Henrys Lake. Gilman Sawtell built a wagon road from Virginia City to his ranch and would pack fish and game on ice and haul them to the new mining towns. He could harvest as many as 40,000 fish a year. Sawtell eventually built six log buildings, a residence, a blacksmith shop, a stable, a storage shed and an ice house. He built his residence big enough to accommodate 20 people and used it as a hotel of sorts. In 1871 he began guiding tourists through the wonders of what would become Yellowstone National Park.

The Congress set aside Yellowstone as a “public park reservation” in 1872. This set about a turn of events around its boundaries for access of tourists. The primary entrance was at Gardiner, Montana, but before too long the western approach would gain some interest. Gilman Sawtell was already offering guiding services out of his ranch at Henrys Lake in 1871. The Utah and Northern Railway was completed to Monida, on the Montana-Idaho border, in March of 1880. Stagecoach service was provided from train stops at Beaver, Spencer, and Monida east to the park. The 85 miles from Monida to the west boundary of the park was an arduous trip, requiring four changes of horses.

The Island Park region became a center of activity of battles and skirmishes in the Nez Perce War of 1877. Frontiersman and Army scout, George Rea, passed through the Island Park area then when guiding General Howard and his troops in pursuit of Chief Joseph and his people. He returned to settle on Shotgun Creek and became the first homesteader in Island Park. Rea's post office was one of the stage line stations of the Bassett lines from Spencer to West Yellowstone with the Arangee Company Hotel as a stage stop. The Monida-Yellowstone-Western stage line made the run through Red Rock Pass. The Gilmore-Salisbury stages from Spencer to Yellowstone used Salisbury ranch near Henrys Lake as a stage station. The Arangee Company Hotel later became the summer home of one of the earliest visitors to appreciate and extol the beauties and potentials of the region, Alfred S. Trude, the eminent Chicago lawyer.

The Island Park area was opened to homestead settlement in the 1880s. Although the Homestead Act was meant to provide farms for the more common man, the attractiveness of the Island Park area and the abundance of fish and game soon attracted affluent hunters and fishermen from out of state. George Rea was a local hunting guide and among those he guided was Theodore Roosevelt, who killed a buffalo in Island Park in 1889. By 1890, several families



were making use of the first summer homes in Island Park.

John, Thomas, and Jenny Bishop homesteaded south of Rea in about 1885. The Jack Golden family set up a dairy farm in the timber on the Middle Fork of Thurman Creek.

By 1888 the Arangee Company had founded the Swiss Colony in the Island Park country, reminiscent of the Swiss Alpine region. A sawmill, a handsome two-and-half-story hotel, topped by a cupola, and flagpole were built. Stocked with imported Holsteins and peopled by Swiss emigrants who started up a cheese factory, made this an impressive beginning for a settlement.

In 1889, E.F. Hopf purchased the homestead of John Kooch and he and his associates established the Arangee Land and Cattle Company. This company greatly influenced settlement of the Island Park region by bringing in several permanent residents. An Arangee employee Charles Ripley, homesteaded on the Henry's Fork and built a tourist facility known as Ripley Inn, which was the predecessor of the modern Last Chance.

The Arangee Land and Cattle Company and its land holdings were sold to famous Chicago attorney Alfred S. Trude in 1890. His purposes was to maintain these properties as a hunting and fishing retreat. His brother Charles moved to Island Park to operate the ranch in 1899. Trude obtained ownership for the Glen Rea Ranch in 1903.

Settlement on homestead claims in the Island Park area began in the mid-1890s. The intention of the Homestead Act was to put plots of land into the hands of citizens of humble financial means. Each claimant was required to make improvements, live on the claim for 5 years and use the land for agricultural purposes. With a very short growing season, the lands in Island Park were certainly not well suited to cultivation of crops. However, the grazing of livestock was feasible. The following is a list of the individuals, with the year patent was issued, who were granted homestead patents for lands that would later be included in the Railroad Ranch: James M. Anderson (1902); Maria L. Anson (1902); William H. Bancroft (1902); Grace W. Bean (1902); Ner Burns (1902); Addie D. Crabb (1908); Robert Dollinger (1904); Mary E. Dollinger (1904); Tillie Duddleson (1903); Thomas Duddelson (1902); Silas W. Eccels (1902); Margaret Eccels (1902); Eugene Graves (1902); Margaret Leik (1902); Edward Manson (1902); Erminie Manson (1903); Duncan McAllister (1911); Robert Osborn (1904); George Robinson (1902); Elizabeth Taylor (1902); and Frank Williamson (1902).

Silas W. Eccles, William H. Bancroft, and James M. Anderson would later become founding members of the Island Park Land and Cattle Company. These men were all affiliated with employment with the Union Pacific Railroad and were hardly farmers of humble financial means. These men lived elsewhere and hardly could meet the five years residency requirement. There are also several of the homesteaders listed above that were not listed in the 1900 census as living at or near their homestead claims. So it can be assumed that gaining patent to the government lands in the area of the Railroad Ranch was somewhat nefarious and the lands would later be primarily used as a retreat for the well to do rather than be populated by citizen farmers.

Perhaps one of the legitimate homesteaders was Robert Osborn and his later wife Addie Crabb. They had settled on the east side of the Henrys Fork in the late 1890s. Later, the Osborn's large house was a stage stop for people on their way to Yellowstone.

Travel to Yellowstone from the Ashton, Idaho area in the early days was by horse or mule pack train because of the steep trail over Ashton Hill. In 1895, a more moderate wagon route along the Warm River was built. Transportation of tourists and supplies to many of the ranches and resorts was now coming from the Ashton area via the wagon road. Stage routes were soon established. Some very early tourists to Yellowstone found overnight accommodations at various stagecoach stops.

Edward Harriman was an avid outdoorsman who believed in the preservation and study of natural areas. He would come to use his wealth for philanthropy in support of conservation efforts. He put together an expeditionary trip to Alaska in 1899. One of those who participated in this expedition was naturalist John Muir, who would become a life-long friend of the Harrimans.

In July 1902, Silas W. Eccles, William H. Bancroft, Harry B. Tooker, James M. Anderson and William N. Bradley incorporated the Island Park Land and Cattle Company in Salt Lake City. Silas Eccles was elected president. They began purchasing over 15 different homestead claims to consolidate the properties that would become the "railroad ranch." It was called that because each of these men had employment or affiliation with the Union Pacific Railroad.

Their stated purpose was to raise, purchase, sell and deal in livestock, but also to operate the ranch as a sporting retreat where they reserved all hunting, fishing and camping privileges to the owners and their guests. As they consolidated their land holdings they could sell shares and/or lots at the ranch. Martin Garn would serve as the first ranch manger from 1908 until about 1920.

In 1905, the St. Anthony Railroad Company built a rail line from Idaho Falls to St. Anthony. Shortly thereafter, the Oregon Short Line (later Union Pacific) gained control of the St. Anthony Railroad Company. It was decided to extend a line from St. Anthony northward to the west entrance of Yellowstone National Park. Some accounts give credit to this idea to Union Pacific official Edward Harriman. It has been said that Harriman was on a trip to Yellowstone Park in 1905 and he became disenchanted with his tedious stagecoach ride through Island Park and strongly encouraged construction of the Yellowstone branch. This project was immediately started in October, 1905 and involved a distance of 70 miles. In 1906, the railroad line was officially opened to Ashton and the roadbed to West Yellowstone was finished in late 1908. However, the route selected followed the Warm River Canyon rather than paralleling the Henrys Fork like the wagon road. The branch line was completed in June 1909.

There was not much in the Island Park area to serve the general tourist until the opening of Mack's Inn in 1909. This early establishment catered first to tourists who arrived by train and later to those traveling by automobile. Facilities were minimal and included only platform tents and a restaurant.

In 1905, The Congress passed a law that created the U.S. Forest Service. The new Forest Service would take over management of all the federal lands that had been designated forest reserves. On July 1, 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt designated 45 new forest reserves (National Forests) scattered throughout 11 western states. The Targhee National Forest was included on this list. Management of all the federal lands within the boundaries of the new National Forest was now transferred from the General Land Office to the Forest Service. For all intents and purpose, this action would mark the end to the settlement era on forest lands in the Island Park area. However, the lands excluded from the boundaries would still be opened to settlement. The federal lands surrounding the "railroad ranch" were now part of the Targhee National Forest.

In 1906, three Guggenheim brothers purchased lots at the ranch. Solomon Guggenheim bought Anderson's lot. Murry Gigginheim bought Bancroft's lot. Then Daniel Guggenheim bought some land from the Island Park Land and Cattle Company near Solomon's lot. So by the end of 1906, there were four lot owners, the Guggenheim brothers and Silas Eccles. Within two years after this, Edward Harriman expressed interest in obtaining property at the ranch.

By 1908, a "nice herd" of Jersey dairy cows, 250 head of beef steers, and about 25 head of horses were turned out on the ranch. This was to fulfill the Island Park Land and Cattle

Company initial purposes. However, there was still a focus on the ranch being a “sporting retreat.”

Silas Eccles was then acting as an intermediary between Harriman and Murry Guggenheim. On December 9, 1908 Eccles wrote to Harriman that he had secured Murry’s lot for him. Harriman immediately asked Eccles to see if he could also purchase the property owned by Daniel and Solomon Guggenheim. Harriman also initiated negotiations to buy the Robert Osborne farm. Daniel and Solomon Guggenheim were not interested in selling. However, Harriman was successful in purchasing Murry Guggenheim’s lot, the 325 acre Osborne farm and house and another 134 acres from the State of Idaho. Edward Harriman did not live to see these properties, but the surname Harriman would become associated with the “railroad ranch” from then on.

Edward Harriman’s son Averell got his first look at the property in 1909 when making a survey for building the Ashton to Victor branch line. He brought his mother Mary, sister Carol, and brother Roland to the ranch in 1911. The Harrimans acquired a second share of Island Park Land and Cattle Company stock and half interest in the ranch in 1915 when William Bancroft died.

The Harrimans often invited their friend John Muir to visit at their retreat properties to enable him to be inspired and help him to continue his writings. John Muir spent most of the summer of 1907 with the Harriman family at their Pelican Bay Lodge on Klamath Lake, where Edward Harriman lent his no nonsense advice to John Muir’s book writing: “You plan and brood too much, Begin, begin, begin! Put forth what you wish to say the first words that come to mind . . .”. Then In 1913 John Muir joined the Harrimans at the Railroad Ranch. Muir spent ten days at the ranch. Muir reflected on this trip by saying, “I was very tired, but a ten day visit and rest at Mrs. Harriman’s Idaho Ranch greatly delighted me. This so far has been my only summer outing.” Great nature philosopher that he was, he undoubtedly led some spirited discussions in regards to preservation of the beautiful surroundings at the ranch. Muir had written: “Of the great builders – the famous doers of things in this busy world – none that I know of more ably and manfully did his appointed work than my friend Edward Henry Harriman.” Muir may have been partially responsible for inspiring the Harrimans to find way to use their wealth to preserve park lands. In 1910, Mary Harriman fulfilled her late husband’s wishes by donating 10,000 acres of her Arden property, along with a million dollars for its upkeep, to the State of New York. It seems that John Muir exercised considerable influence over the creation of park lands far beyond just the realm of Yosemite Valley. His visit to Idaho, although short, would leave a very long lived imprint on the future.

Homestead settlement on the lands which would become the “Sheridan Ranch” had begun around 1900. The following is a list of the individuals, with the year patent was issued, who were granted homestead patents for lands that would later be included in the Sheridan Ranch: Julius J. Allen (1918); James M. Bishop (1915); Jennie Bishop (1915); John B. Bishop (1915); Mary M. Bishop (1915); Robert L. Bishop (1915); Richard Helman (1897); Hugh S. McGinnis (1919); Ivie L. Potter (1916); Lewis W. Potter (1916); Ambrose Ripley (1904); Jessie C. Ripley (1907); John F. Ripley (1904); Eliza S. Row (1915); John Row (1904); James H. Salley (1919); Robert T. Simerly (1928); Nancy Ellen Stocks (1922)), and Samuel A. Trude (1915).

Purchases and consolidation of the lands for the Sheridan Ranch began in about 1916. Martin Garn initiated negotiations to purchased the Bishop homestead and the Salley homestead. The Bishop homestead was purchased in 1916. The Salley purchase took on additional

negotiations and was purchased on April 19, 1918. Other settlers – Ritchie, McGinnis, Laird and more – would also be bought out, and state lands acquired before this ranch would be completely consolidated. During the 1920s the owners and their guests frequently traveled to the Sheridan Ranch to hunt sage grouse.

By 1917 there were 20 structures on the Railroad Ranch, including eight barns, six dwellings and miscellaneous shops, offices and quarters for employees. The company also owned six buildings at the Sheridan Ranch and a barn at the Island Park railroad station.

In 1918, Solomon Guggenheim replaced Silas Eccles as president of the Island Park Land and Cattle Company and would serve in this position until his death in 1949. The Guggenheims and the Harrimans were now the principal families at the ranch.

In 1920, Averell Harriman requested that his brother Roland take over in all matters regarding the Island Park Land and Cattle Company. After that time, Averell's visits to the ranch became infrequent. However, Roland and Gladys Harriman came to the ranch almost every summer.

Shortly after Roland assumed his responsibilities for the Island Park Land and Cattle Company business, James Anderson, one of the original property owners of the ranch, replaced Martin Garn as ranch superintendent in 1920. Anderson began increasing the livestock operation to not only include cattle, but sheep as well. A herd of 70 elk had also been acquired in the purchase of the Bishop homestead. By 1924 this herd had increased to over 110 animals. In 1923 six head of bison were brought to the ranch from Yellowstone. The bison herd would never be more than about ten animals and they were all sold in the 1930s.

Superintendent James Anderson lived in San Diego, California in the winters. He deemed it necessary to hire a man "to take full charge of the ranch" under his directions that would live on the ranch year round. He hired Sam Trude as ranch manager in 1921. James Anderson remained superintendent until 1928.

In 1928 the Island Park Land and Cattle Company, after considerable legal maneuvering, managed to have Golden and Silver Lakes designated as "private ponds." This action made it illegal for outsiders to fish the lakes. While Anderson was still superintendent, Sam Trude lobbied the state legislature to pass various laws that would effectively prohibit fishing on that part of the Henrys Fork flowing through the ranch. When these efforts failed he proposed establishing part of the ranch as a bird and fish sanctuary, prohibiting all fishing and hunting. These sorts of conservation efforts would be the start of the proscriptive fish and wildlife policies that exist at Harriman State Park today.

Ranch manager Sam Trude took over the ranch superintendent responsibilities in 1929. The Great Depression started in 1929 and the ranch began to sustain significant losses in its livestock business. In the Spring of 1932, for the only time in its history, the Railroad Ranch went out of the ranching business. The bison were sold in late 1932 for \$125. There were still about a dozen ranch owned elk. Trude got rid of these animals in 1934. Trude struggled to find ways to reduce expenses and to try to turn a profit in the difficult depression era. Towards the end of his tenure, Trude attempted to start a sheep operation with very limited success. However, Trude would be replaced as superintendent in 1935 by a cattleman named Dan Clark.

Dan Clark was the general livestock agent for the Union Pacific railroad. Roland Harriman had met him at a round-up in the late 1920s in Pendleton, Oregon. Solomon Guggenheim left it to the Harrimans to make the appointment of Clark as the new ranch superintendent. The transition between Trude and Clark apparently was quite cordial. Clark arrived at the ranch prior to Trude's departure to familiarize himself with the operation.

One of Clark's first actions was to terminate the sheep operation started by Trude. He maintained only enough sheep from 1935 on to provide the employees and owners with mutton and lamb. In 1936, Clark initiated a procedure of purchasing steers in Texas in the early spring, feeding them through the summer and early fall at ranch, then selling most of them. He would only keep as many as the ranch's hay crop could feed during the winter. This resulted in moving towards a fairly successful cow-calf operation at the ranch. This cattle operation would expand at the ranch after WWII.

In 1937 the Island Park Land and Cattle Company sold 3,928 acres from the Sheridan Ranch to the federal government so that the Bureau of Reclamation could create Island Park Reservoir. The government had originally offered \$34,000 for the property, but Roland Harriman filed a lawsuit claiming the offer was too low, and the case was eventually settled out of court with the government paying \$56,000. The Island Park Dam was built by the Bureau of Reclamation between 1937 and 1939 as part of the Minidoka Project, which provides water to irrigate farmland in Idaho's Snake River Plain. The waters of the new reservoir soon backed up towards the remaining Sheridan Ranch lands. Further, the flow of the Henrys Fork past the Railroad Ranch was now more regulated.

In 1940 the Island Park Land and Cattle Company purchase 200 acres from Lewis and Ivie Potter, providing it with complete ownership of all private land between the Railroad Ranch and the National Forest boundary.

The Railroad and Sheridan Ranches continued to be used by the owners for summer excursions and enhancement of fishing and hunting opportunities throughout Dan Clark's tenure as superintendent. In 1941 he obtained a small flock of Hungarian partridges from the IDFG to stock the ranch with. In 1945 he arranged for the county extension service to plant a variety of trees on the ranch, including Siberian pea, golden willow, ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and blue and Norway spruce. In 1941 and again in 1942, Dan Clark requested that the IDFG create a bird sanctuary on that part of the Henrys Fork running through the ranch. However, he was unsuccessful in this effort.

In the fall of 1946, the company purchased 40 acres of land from the State of Idaho and later that same year Dan Clark purchased an additional 640 acres and transferred ownership to the Island Park Land and Cattle Company.

Solomon Guggenheim died in 1949, having served as president of the Island Park Land and Cattle Company from 1918 until his death. His passing marked the beginning of the gradual shift from the Island Park property as the Railroad Ranch to Harriman State Park. Throughout his 31 year tenure, the Railroad Ranch served both as a retreat and a working cattle operation. Upon Guggenheim's death, The Harrimans became more interested in gaining control over the ranch.

Solomon Guggenheim bequeathed his interests in the ranch to his two daughter, Barbara Obre and Eleanor May. In 1954, Barbara and Eleanor sold their interests in the ranch to the Harriman brothers. After this transaction, Roland Harriman became the Island Park Land and Cattle Company's third and final president.

Also in 1954, the Island Park Land and Cattle Company took on another investment partner named Charles Stone Jones. Jones had become wealthy as an oil man in California and eventually would become Chairman of the Board for the Atlantic Richfield Company.

On April 30, 1955, the Island Park Land and Cattle Company was replaced with the Railroad Ranch Cattle Company. Roland Harriman held 50% interest in this company, while Averell Harriman and Charles Jones held 25% respectively. The ranching operation at the Railroad Ranch had never been a huge profit maker. The ranch had always served as a tax shelter

for its owners, and the formation of the Railroad Ranch Cattle Company was meant to maximize these tax benefits.

Superintendent Dan Clark's involvement in the ranch began to decline in 1950. By late 1953, Dan Clark, Jr. had assumed the responsibilities of superintendent. In 1953 the Railroad Ranch consisted of 4,173 acres and the Sheridan Ranch consisted of 7,464 acres. However, 3,928 acres of the Sheridan Ranch were inundated by Island Park Reservoir. In this era, saving wildlife simply for wildlife's sake became an important objective.

The 1950s would be the height of conservation efforts at the ranch. The Harrimans realized that the years of fishing and hunting were diminishing wildlife at the ranch. Back when the elk herd was released in the 1930s, the Harrimans and Guggenheim had a verbal understanding with the IDFG that lands adjacent to the ranch would be closed to all elk hunting. They viewed this as a somewhat "preserve" designation for the ranch and surrounding lands. But around 1950, the IDFG began to allow hunters to take elk, deer and moose in this former "preserve" during a special license season. Roland Harriman was not pleased with this and in 1956, he reiterated his feelings that "it would be good policy to reestablish a sanctuary for big game in and around our ranch property." He proposed this even though it would affect the hunting privileges of the ranch owners and their guests.

The proposed big game sanctuary would be in addition to the bird sanctuary that was established during the 1940s for the section of the Henrys Fork that runs through the ranch. That sanctuary was also closed to fisherman during migratory bird nesting season. In 1956 the IDFG advanced the fishing season opening at the ranch to June 4 on the assumption that goose nesting in the area was well over with by that date.

In the mid 1950s, the owners were alarmed at the increasing occurrences of trumpeter swan kills on and around the ranch by hunters who could not tell the difference between swan and geese. The owners considered making part of the ranch into a bird refuge where all hunting would be prohibited.

The owners had mistakenly assumed that Sam Trude had succeeded in having Golden and Silver Lakes designated as "private ponds" back in the 1920s. However, that attempt had failed because the ponds were not eligible for such status due to the fact that they both were fed by streams that contained natural game fish. So the waters of the ponds and the fish were "public" but the lands that surrounded them were private. This created further trespass problems for the ranch. It would not be until 1977, when the state obtained the ranch that Golden and Silver Lakes were finally and completely closed to fishing.

Dan Clark, Jr. retired from the Railroad Ranch superintendent position in 1960. He was replaced by an agent for the Union Pacific Railroad in Idaho named Ben Meese. Meese would be the last superintendent of the Railroad Ranch. It was during this period that the "cattle drives" at the ranch became popular and the annual event was even publicized. However, the cattle had always been driven to and from the railroad siding when being shipped in or out of the ranch. After all, the railroad was owned and operated by the same people who owned railroad ranch. However, passenger service on the branch between Ashton and West Yellowstone was discontinued in about 1959. Freight and livestock were still being transported up until about 1979 when the branch was abandoned. The last cattle drive occurred in 1971. After that the cattle were transported by truck.

Roland Harriman began thinking about donating the Railroad Ranch to become a state park in the 1950s. He reflected on his thinking in a letter to Averell saying: ". . . because we just could not face the prospect of its becoming nothing more than an uncontrolled real estate

development with hot dog stands and cheap honky-tonks, and because we could foresee the necessity for preserving such property for the enjoyment of future generations.” In 1959 Roland invited Idaho Governor Robert Smylie to the ranch to discuss the potential transfer. By the Spring of 1961, Charles Jones decided to withdraw as a partner and sold his interests to the Harriman brothers. In December 1961, Roland and Averell Harriman signed an agreement in which they agreed to donate the ranch to the State of Idaho for use as a park.

**Park History:** Robert Smylie was elected Governor of Idaho in 1954 on a platform consisting of four major issues, one of them revolved around environmental concerns, particularly the need for more state parks. At that time, Idaho had only six “state parks” loosely managed by the State Land board. There was no “parks department.” Shortly after taking office, Smylie convinced the legislature to accept the 4,500 acre Mary Minerva McCroskey State Park that was being offered as a donation from Virgil McCroskey. This would set a precedent for the State of Idaho accepting donations of property to become state parks. Roland Harriman invited Governor Smylie to the Railroad Ranch to discuss the possibility of a donation of the ranch as a park.

In December 1961, Roland and Averell Harriman signed an agreement in which they agreed to donate the ranch to the State of Idaho for use as a park. In the agreement, the State recognized “the right of E. Roland Harriman and Gladys F. Harriman to the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of the property during their lifetimes.” The state further agreed to prevent trespassing during this transitional period through increased state surveillance. This plus Ben Meese’s efforts virtually eliminated the trespassing problem that had plagued the ranch for decades. This further solidified the use of the ranch as a wildlife refuge. This transitional period would continue for about 16 years.

Governor Smylie announced the agreement to accept the donation of the ranch, saying, “It will doubtless be one of the outstanding state parks of the nation when it is finally established and operating.” In accepting the gift, the State of Idaho agreed that it would make an effort to extend the boundaries of the park; disallow hunting on the land; permit fishing on Henrys Fork with flies only; sell the Lima Ranch and use the proceeds for improving Harriman State Park; and pay Fremont County money in lieu of taxes on the property. Further, the gift was contingent upon the state developing “a professionally staffed career Park Service whose personnel shall be chosen on the basis of merit alone.”

The effort to create the “parks department” would take a few years. A bill to do this was introduced in the 1961 legislative session, but failed to pass. It was introduced once again in 1963, but again failed to pass. Finally a bill was passed in the 1965 session and the new State Department of Parks and Recreation was created on July 1, 1965. Governor Smylie had now succeeded in building the foundation necessary for creating a Harriman State Park.

The newly authorized and appointed State Park Board members immediately went to meet with Averell Harriman in an attempt to persuade him to turn over control of the property to the state earlier than anticipated. However, the Harrimans were not yet ready to make this happen. But Roland Harriman illustrated their further support by donating some life insurance policies to the state to be used for operating the “park” in the transitional period and then he donated another \$10,000 to begin the park planning process.

In December 1973, Averell Harriman resigned as director of the Island Park Land and Cattle Company and signed over one million dollars worth of interest in the company to the Idaho Park Foundation. Then in 1975, Averell donated his interests in the Harriman East Ranch to the Idaho Park Foundation, and Roland did the same a year later, with the stipulation that the

property be turned over to the state upon demand.

By 1976 Roland Harriman's health was rapidly failing. Unable to further enjoy their Island Park property, he and Gladys decided to complete the donation by turning over control of the ranch to the state before their death. By this time, former Governor Robert Smylie, who had initiated the original donation agreement with the Harrimans, was no longer Governor. So he was now acting as the Harriman's attorney for the donation. At a meeting that Smylie had with them in May 1976, the Harrimans agreed to an early transfer of the ranch property. Then Governor Cecil Andrus announced this change of plans on December 1, 1976. Andrus stated: "This is one of the most significant achievements of the State of Idaho in reference to parks, public lands and preservation for the future."

The Harriman family placed several other conditions upon the State of Idaho when they officially donated the ranch on April 1, 1977, these were: (1) The land was to be managed with "man being in harmony with nature;" (2) The land was to be treated as a "wildlife refuge;" and (3) The Henrys Fork of the Snake River was to be managed as a bird sanctuary for trumpeter swans.

Governor Andrus had left Idaho to become Secretary of the Interior, so by October 1977, Governor John Evans had accepted all the Harrimans interests in the Railroad Ranch, including those held by the Idaho Park Foundation, to become an Idaho State Park.

The first State Park employees had arrived at the ranch in 1976. However, the IDPR did not immediately open the park to visitors while it worked on methods of enabling the public to enjoy the site without disturbing its delicate ecological balance.

In 1980 the first park developments got underway. The park's new access road was built and the old ranch access road was removed and reseeded. Construction was completed on the dormitory. The dorm was initially used by Youth Conservation Corp members working out of the park.

In 1981 construction began on the park's new visitor and support facilities, which included the park entrance sign; park headquarters; Sage Flats fishing access road, parking, restroom and interpretive kiosk; dorm parking lot; Ranch View parking, restroom, information kiosk, river overlook, interpretive walkway and panels; paved pathway from Ranch View through the historic buildings; and interpretive kiosk in the historic building complex. Also being constructed at that time were the maintenance shop and vehicle shed; two staff residences; the ranch complex sand mound wastewater treatment system; the greywater wastewater treatment system; septic systems for park headquarters, the shop and headquarters-area residences; and the water system and electricity to park headquarters, shop and headquarters-area residences. The Silver Lake dam also underwent renovations in this year.

In the winter of 1982 Harriman State Park was opened to cross-country skiers. On July 17, 1982, the park was officially opened to the public with a large ceremony. The park's first full summer of visitation came in 1983.

In the fall of 1985 the historic horse barn was the first of the historic structures to be stabilized under park management.



In 1986 fencing was placed along 8 miles of the Henrys Fork through the park to protect the riparian habitat.

In 1995 the Boys House was remodeled for use as an educational and meeting facility.

In 1996 new spillways for Golden and Silver Lakes were constructed.

On December 20, 1996, the ranch complex at Harriman State Park of Idaho was listed as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places as the Island Park Land and Cattle Company.

In spring of 1998 the Ranch Manager's House was refurbished and opened for overnight lodging.

In 2000 the historic auto garage and cow barn facilities were stabilized.

In January 2001 yurts were added to Harriman's facilities for overnight visitors.

In spring and summer of 2001 the intersection of Green Canyon Road with Highway 20 was moved several hundred feet south and a new parking lot/day use facility was added at the Osborne boat launch.

In 2001 and 2002, the Harriman dining cottage was stabilized, receiving a new roof, logs and foundation.

Construction of a group shelter in the Ranch View area was started in 2017.

### **Recreation Activities:**

Scenic Viewing: The scenery at Harriman State Park is outstanding. A variety of landscapes can be viewed here. The river, the surrounding mountains, the lakes all offer unique viewing opportunities. This is a "must see" park for Idaho.

Fishing: The reach of the Henrys Fork through Harriman State Park is one of America's greatest trout streams. This reach of river is one of the primary attractions of the park. The fishing season on the river within the park is adjusted to protect many species of waterfowl during their important breeding and nesting seasons. This means that the river does not open to fishing until June 15 and the season ends on November 30. Be sure to check current fishing regulations before going out. Only fly fishing is permitted on the Henrys Fork within the park. Fly fishing with single barbless hook keeps fishing quality high by reducing hooking injuries to fish. This increases their chances of survival when released. Silver Lake and Golden Lake are both wildlife

### **Please Remember**

- There is a \$5.00 per vehicle per day fee required for access to the area. This is required even though there are no entrance stations operated by the park.
- Campfires are only allowed in the provided fire rings.
- Dogs are only allowed in the parking lots and must be on a leash at all times and are not permitted in the buildings.
- Motor vehicles are to stay on established roadways unless directed otherwise.
- Camping is not allowed in the park. Overnight lodging is only allowed in the buildings and yurts available for rent. All other areas of the park are day use only.
- Only fly fishing is allowed on the Henrys Fork in the park. Fishing is not allowed on Silver Lake or Golden Lake.
- The open fishing season on the Henrys Fork in the park is June 15 through November 30.
- Motorized boats are not allowed on the Henrys Fork in the park.
- Personal floatation devices are required for any water craft.
- All watercraft must display a current invasive species decal.

sanctuaries that are closed to all fishing. General fishing is allowed at the Fish Pond in the East Harriman area.

Boating: Non-motorized boating in the form of rafts, drift boats, canoes, kayaks, paddle boards and float tubes are permitted on the Henrys Fork within the park. There is a boat ramp just upstream from Last Chance where you can put in. Harriman State Park provides a put in-take out ramp at the Osborn Bridge parking area. Such non-motorized craft can also be used on Fish Pond in the East Harriman area. There is a hand launch ramp there. Boating is not allowed on Silver Lake or Golden Lake.

Lodging: Although there is no camping allowed in the park, yurts and remodeled historic cabins allow visitors to experience the railroad ranch in a special way. Group facilities are also available for family reunions, business groups, and large gatherings of friends. No matter the season, an overnight stay at Harriman is a unique and memorable experience.

Picnicking: There are 15 picnic tables available for individual day use. These tables are located at the Railroad Ranch, Ranch View, Sage Flat and Silver Lake.

Nature Study/Birding: As an outstanding place to look for birds, the park is a component of the Idaho Birding Trail. The park's outstanding landscapes are an excellent place for nature study of all kinds. An ADA type trail is available at the Ranch View parking lot. The trail is paved and has several interpretive panels that provide a great overview of the park and its resources.

The Park's John Muir trail provides a place to learn about the early conservation movement and the part that John Muir and this movement played in creating Harriman State Park. The trailhead is located adjacent to the park's visitor center. This gentle trail along the banks of the Henrys Fork is where America's "Father of National Parks" sketched and wrote in his nature journal on August 17, 1913. John Muir's friendship with the Harriman family influenced their decision to give the ranch to the Idaho State Park system as a wildlife refuge. Imagine the naturalist Muir at you side as you stroll the interpretive loop that's designed to introduce the park's habitats and wildlife. What might such a keen observer have noticed about the trees, wind, animal tracks, bird song, season, and river life.

Trails: About 24 miles of non-motorized multiple-use trails can be found within the park. These trails range from short half-hour strolls through the ranch complex to more strenuous loop trails accessing remote sections of the park and the adjacent Targhee National Forest. The park's trail system was designed with the wildlife refuge in mind. The trail system offers excellent opportunities to view and photograph wildlife, although efforts have been made to limit the encroachment upon sensitive wildlife areas. No matter the season, these trails provide access to the less explored portions of the park. Hikers, bikers, horsemen, and snow skiers can enjoy a variety of trails which reveal the park's scenery and wildlife. From an hour-long hike to an all day excursion, Harriman has a trail suited for your needs.

Horseback Riding: There is a horseback riding concession available from June 1 through October 31 at the Ranch View area. One hour, two hour and three to four hour group rides are provided here. The rides are guided on various trails in the park.

Winter Sports: Nordic skiing and snow shoeing is available in the winter months. The 24 mile trail system is groomed for this purpose. The historic Jones House serves as a warming hut on weekends.

Visitor Center: The Visitor Center has displays, exhibits, a public counter, and an area for sales of books, souvenirs and other items. It is located at the main entrance to the park.

Ranch Tours: Tours of the Railroad Ranch are available Memorial Day through Labor Day on weekends and holidays. Check at the Visitor Center for scheduled times.

**Resource Management Issues:** The Harriman Agreement of December 4, 1961 is somewhat binding on how the resources of the park are managed. The agreement sets forth the following conditions:

1. The name of the park shall be called "Harriman State Park of Idaho."
2. The Legislature was to establish a professionally staffed career "Park Service whose personnel shall be chosen on the basis of merit alone."
3. The State was to pay Fremont County a sum of money in lieu of taxes equal to the sum which would have been paid had the property remained in private ownership.
4. Hunting, shooting and trapping by the general public were to be prohibited in the park.
5. Fishing shall be restricted to the use of dry and wet flies only.
6. The bird sanctuary between the Ranch Bridge and Osborne Bridge shall be continued in perpetuity.
7. The property in Lima, Montana that was also donated to the State of Idaho was to be sold and the proceeds used to benefit Harriman State Park of Idaho.
8. The park was to try to expand its boundaries to include "all lands west of the Snake River from the Osborne Bridge to the Island Park Reservoir Dam thence westerly to Green Canyon Road back to the point of beginning." Within these same boundaries, hunting, shooting and trapping were to be prohibited.
9. Permission was given to "either directly or by concession make such provisions as may seem . . . proper for food, lodging and saddle horses within the park and may also make such arrangements for forestry, agriculture and cattle raising.
10. Permission was also given to construct and maintain a small aircraft landing strip in the park.
11. E. Roland and Gladys F. Harriman were granted lifetime estates on the property.

## **Discussion**

Livestock Grazing: There are existing livestock grazing leases at both the Railroad Ranch and Sheridan Ranch units. Yet, the policy of the IDPR says that: "Grazing is not encouraged in state park areas." The policy makes an exception that it can occur if "It is determined that grazing would be advantageous, with no expected detriment to the park environment or enjoyment of the people, and in conformance with the master plan." Livestock grazing was an historic use at the park and it is mentioned in the master plan. However, this seems very contradictory for a park that is supposed to be Idaho's premier wildlife park. It is generally a non-conforming use when it comes to the application of words such as "sanctuary" and "refuge." Further, livestock grazing is considered to be very detrimental to wetland and riparian areas which are somewhat prevalent in the park. While livestock grazing was a historic use, planning on it as a future use just seems

contrary to the purposes of the park.

Camping: There are no campgrounds in the park. For what ever reason there appears to be a covert undercurrent opposition to the idea of providing a developed campground at Harriman State Park. The dichotomy in this is that “cow-pies” (see above grazing discussion) are preferred over campers. This is really contrary to the general purposes of a state park. Harriman State Park is Idaho’s largest state park, yet it seems there is no room to accommodate the over 100,000 persons in Idaho with registered RVs. Thousands more who own tents are also denied an opportunity of camping in the park. Then there are the thousands of potential campers that pass by Harriman State Park on the way to Yellowstone National Park. Then a few years back, the IDPR was challenged to look for more entrepreneurial opportunities to help support and fund park operations. Granted, the park does offer some overnight lodging opportunities in its historic buildings, conference space, and yurt rentals. But the cheapest overnight rental (yurts) go for over \$60.00 per night. The historic buildings and conference rentals go for hundreds of dollars per night. While campsites would average around \$20.00 per night. This creates a somewhat “elitist” effect for overnight lodging at Harriman where Idaho’s financially disadvantaged families are denied an opportunity to stay in the park. Further, the park revenues would be tremendously increased by those campers on the way to Yellowstone. Finally, providing camping would make Harriman more of a destination park where some visitors would even spend their vacations.

Expanding Boundaries: In their agreement of December 4, 1961, the Harrimans wanted the park to try to expand its boundaries. It certainly make sense to do that but it seems over the years IDPR has done very little to add properties to the park. This is especially necessary in places where encroaching recreation uses are beginning to impact the park properties and where it make sense to the public to be dealing with one management entity. One such area is the dispersed camping place on Forest Service lands in the East Harriman area. It is obvious that people (most likely anglers) are camping here (without paying any fees) and use it as a staging place for walking into the park property and accessing the Henrys Fork. The same is true for the gravel road that leads to Fish Pond. Also, the well developed Bing Lempke Parking Area (AKA: Last Chance Fisherman Access Site) is almost immediately adjacent to park properties. It is used primarily by those wishing to access (again without paying a fee) the Henrys Fork in the park either by trail or cross-country (cross-river) foot traffic. It makes little sense for these uses to not be managed by IDPR and at least a Motor Vehicle Entry Fee collected.

Fencing: Due to the operation of livestock grazing leases, the park has an abundance of “livestock” fencing. Further, other fencing is on place to control public access. Barbed wire fencing is not wildlife friendly and presents a barrier to wildlife migrations. This should not be the case in a park primarily set aside for wildlife purposes.

Visitor Center: While the park has a functioning visitor center, it is not what one would expect for Idaho’s largest and most premier natural park. Harriman State Park is worthy of a “destination” visitor center modeled after those that IDPR operates at Three Island Crossing, Hells Gate, and Land of the Yankee Fork. In fact, the current visitor center is more like just an office that happens to be in a former converted park house. The Mesa Falls Recreation Area has a better visitor center. Harriman should have a visitor center that is an attraction in itself and would cause the tourists on Highway 20 to turn off into the park and enjoy an educational experience.

Bison Reintroduction: Harriman State Park prides itself as a wildlife refuge. It touts the presence of most all of the great wildlife species that historically roamed the area. That is, all but one species, the American Bison. This is a very controversial subject as local cattlemen and the Idaho Department of Agriculture do not want to see any natural reintroduction of this species from herds in Yellowstone National Park due to the possibility of the animals carrying brucellosis. Historically the American Bison was present in the area near Harriman State Park. Theodore Roosevelt killed a bison in Island Park in 1889. The Railroad Ranch even maintained a small herd from 1923 to 1932. So bison have a “historical” link just as well as livestock grazing. Bison do not exist anywhere else in the Idaho State Park System. The American Bison is the “missing link” in the Harriman State Park wildlife story. Yet, being the largest Idaho state park, there should be room to accommodate this majestic animal.

Noxious weeds: Several species of invasive and noxious weeds are found in the park that include: leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, yellow toadflax, yellow thistle, and Canada thistle.

**Suggestions for the Future**: Although, the Harriman State Park Master Plan was completed in August 2002, the part of the plan that include the “Proposed Development” and “Proposed Land Acquisitions Sections” are missing from the IDPR public webpage. So the recommendations below represent a few possibilities for the park.

Those recommendations that represent very favorable enhancements for Harriman State Park are as follows:

- The construction of the group shelter at Ranch View has been started and finished for the most part in 2017. However, it still needs to be furnished with picnic tables and grills.
- A back country yurt has been planned for several years. It is to be installed near Golden Lake.
- Harriman State Park has been open to the public since 1982, yet its primary public road system consist of gravel roads. IDPR should consider paving these roads and the parking lots they lead to. Not only is this more convenient to the public but paved roads cause less sedimentation into stream and rivers that are prime spawning grounds for trout and other fish.
- IDPR should consider not renewing existing grazing leases when they expire.
- IDPR should reconsider any unwritten policies that bar the idea of camping in the park. Consideration should be given to installing an RV campground. The ideal location for this would be the well forested area between the maintenance shop and the Silver Lake yurts. There is more than enough room for a campground loop in this area. Consideration should also be given to installing a standard campground in the East Harriman area near the location that is currently being impacted by dispersed camping on Forest Service land next to the park property.
- IDPR should consider proposing to the Forest Service a “Granger-Thye Act” lease for: (1) the Bing Lempke Parking Area; (2) all Forest Services lands between the eastern boundary of the park and Highway 20; and (3) all Forest Service lands that are between the East Harriman part of the park and the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway. These “leases” are available to any “public or private agencies.” An example of this was recently done with a private entity for recreation sites in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. It basically give such an entity authority to set fees and collect fees directly. The entity keeps the fees

and pays to the Forest Service approximately 14% of the fees annually. However, any maintenance and improvement costs above and beyond day to day housekeeping is deductible from the 14%. Since a private entity has found this sort of arrangement to be sufficiently profitable, it is probable that the same could be true for the IDPR at Harriman State Park. Further, the IDPR is supposed to consider possible entrepreneurial opportunities, so the feasibility of this suggestion should be explored.

- IDPR should consider acquiring by purchase, agreement or otherwise the Idaho Department of Lands parcel at the intersection of Highway 20 and the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway. Taking this action in combination with the proposed “Granger-Thye Act” lease, the park will be able to expand its property boundaries to the very defensible boundaries of Highway 20 and the Mesa Falls Scenic Byway.
- IDPR should consider acquiring the two small BLM parcels that are immediately adjacent to the Sheridan Ranch unit. This could be done through submission of a Recreation and Public Purposes Act application.
- IDPR should consider converting all barbed wire fencing to smooth wire fencing that is designed to be wildlife friendly, especially for migration of ungulates like the pronghorn antelope.
- IDPR should consider building a destination style visitor center at the park. It should be placed in a location that best provides for views of the various landscapes in the park. It would provide a place for public contact, education, and gift shop materials. It would also function as the staging place for the park’s interpretive programs.
- IDPR should consider installing a paved bike trail from the Bing Lempke parking area to Railroad Ranch. This would not only provide accessibility to skinny tire bicycles but also wheel chairs and strollers. It would become a pedestrian corridor and connector between Railroad Ranch and the developments at Last Chance. The existing former roadbed for the old highway could be utilized for this purpose.
- IDPR should consider reintroduction of the American Bison to Harriman State Park. This reintroduction would essentially replace “unnatural” livestock grazing. This would take special infrastructure improvements such as the kind of fencing that would prevent their escape completely into the wild. This would probably be required by the Department of Agriculture. The IDFG could be a potential partner for this. IDPR could also probably solicit the cooperation and support of local Native American tribes in this endeavor. Eventually the viewing of these animals would become an attraction in the park.