

MONTANA WILDERNESS LODGE/FLOAT

SPOTTED BEAR, NORTHWEST MONTANA



PRE-TRIP TACKLE & TRAVEL PLANNER

Lodge GPS Coordinates: 47°56'34.39"N 113°33'23.62"W

Trailhead : 47°49'56.88"N 113°25'12.02"W

WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM

Trip Questionnaire: Once you have arranged your travel details, please click on the link below. This will take you an electronic questionnaire form that we ask you to complete and submit to The Fly Shop. Please be sure to click the **“Submit”** button at the end of the form. The information provided will help us -- and the outfitter best coordinate your trip. THANK YOU!

Trip Questionnaire: [Click Here](#)

Traveling to Montana Wilderness Lodge:

Getting to the trailhead is easy. In most cases you will fly from home to Glacier Park International Airport in Kalispell Montana (FCA). From here it is just over a 2 hour (1.5 hours on gravel) drive from the Airport to the Lodge. You can rent a car or MWL can provide a transfer to the Lodge/Trailhead for an additional cost. Please arrange to arrive at the lodge after 2 pm the day before departure or at the trailhead 9:00 AM the day of departure for the float.

- [Directions from Glacier International Airport \(FCA\) to the Lodge](#)
- [Directions from Glacier International Airport \(FCA\) to Meadow Creek Trailhead](#)

You can drive on either the West side or east of Hungry Horse Reservoir. The West side has a little more pavement and is more scenic, but is also more winding, so it typically takes a 20-30 minutes longer. Directions above are for the East side drive.

Airport Shuttles: Shuttle can be arranged from FCA airport to the lodge upon request. Please let us know in advance so we have plenty of time to schedule this. It is around \$400 for up to 4 guests round trip.

Private plane/Helicopter shuttle:

Don't feel like an hour and a half of dirt road and want a scenic sightseeing tour while getting to the lodge?

Red Eagle Aviation out of Kalispell City Airport offers charter services to several backcountry airstrips. The charter for 2 people is around \$600 and is about a 20 min flight. They have several planes and can accommodate up to 5 guests.

For a more scenic option Red Eagle offers tours of Glacier National Park, around \$750 per hour plus the additional charter fee. The tour takes you right through the heart of Glacier, into the Bob Marshall and right over the lodge to the Spotted Bear airstrip. There is no better way to kick off your trip then seeing everything from the air. Red Eagle Aviation. 406-155-2376.

A helicopter can also be reserved to transport you to the lodge for 6 guests plus luggage for around \$1,500.

Departure Day

Typically, guests should prepare to depart the lodge after breakfast – but MWL is very flexible with check out time but ask that you have your things out of your room by 10:00 AM so they can

prepare rooms for the next guests. If you have a late flight, you can hang around the lodge until your departure time. Many guests will have their own vehicles to transport themselves back to the Glacier Park International Airport in Kalispell (FCA), or to continue on with the next stage of their Montana angling adventure. If the Lodge helped arrange a shuttle for you confirm this with them the night before. For the Float you are back at your vehicle between 4-5 pm and you are on your way. Many guests choose to stay an extra night at the lodge(\$150/person/night) but some choose to head out to Columbia Falls or Kalispell and spend the night there.

Trout Tackle & Equipment

Fly Rods:

Multi-piece 6, 5 & 4 weight fly rods will cover most of the fishing situations you'll encounter. If you enjoy streamer fishing, we recommend bringing a nice light weight, fast-action 7 weight. If you plan on walk wade fishing mostly small tributaries, a 4 weight would be perfect for these Cutthroats. We strongly recommend a multi-piece travel rod (3, 4 or 5 piece). The Ideal rod for Cutthroat fishing is a 5 wt. Rods you might consider are:

- Scott Fly Rods
- R.L. Winston Fly Rods
- The Fly Shop Signature Fly Rods

Double Handed Rods/Switch Rods:

While not necessary, Spey rods can be an advantage on the South Fork of the Flathead River when chasing Bull Trout from the lodge in June and July. Bring rods in the 6 or 7 weight class, 11 to 14 feet in length. There are several great options from Winston, Sage, Echo and The Fly Shop®. Echo makes some great economically-priced versions. Match your rod with an AirFlo Compact Skagit or Rio equivalents with interchangeable tips. The world of Spey lines and leaders can be complicated, so please feel to contact us here at The Fly Shop® • 800-669-3474 • Fax: 530-222-3572 • travel@theflyshop.com

Fly Reels:

Good quality, lightweight fly reels, with simple disk drags or pawl drags, are the best choice. Reels should be filled with fresh 20 pound backing. Reel models to consider might include:

- The Fly Shop's Signature Reels
- Galvan Reels
- Ross Reels

Fly Lines:

Floating lines are used almost exclusively. If you have a type III sink tip for a 6-7 weight, be sure to bring it along if you are going for the Bull Trout early in the season.

- Scientific Anglers or Rio Freshwater Fly Lines

Note: Basic rods and reels are available if needed. All leaders, tippet and flies are provided during your stay at Montana Wilderness Lodge. Although flies are provided, we always suggest bringing some of the patterns listed below so you have some on you when you are fishing after dinner or end up away from your guide.

Leaders & Tippet:

Keep it simple on leaders; 9' leaders tapered to 5X and 4X (throw in a couple of 7.5' 0X leaders for throwing big bugs for Bull Trout). Two - three of each leader size should be plenty. Bring fresh tippet in sizes, 5X, 4X, and 0X. Scientific Anglers, Rio, and Seaguar make some of the best tippet and leader material available.

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June/July		Sizes	Patterns
Cutthroat	Mayflies	#10-14	Parachute Adams, Purple Haze, Yellow Humpy, Royal Wulff Improved Sparkle Dun, Hunchback March Brown, Missing Link, Film Critic
	Nymphs	#14-16	PT Nymph, Purple Jigged Psycho prince, Hares Ears Copper John, Purple Holo Point, Jiggy Caddis, Poopah
	Yellow Sally	#14-16	Missing Link Yellow Stone, Silvey's Chubby Sallie
	Caddis	#12-14	Missing Link, E/C Caddis, Goddard Caddis, Elk Hair Caddis, Yellow Stimulator, Blooms Parachute Caddis
	Streamers	#8-12	White BH Micro bugger, Silver BH Crystal Bugger, Tak's Mini Minnow
Bull Trout	Streamers	#2-4	Black Dungeon, Meat whistle, Laniers Streamers, Living Leech Silvey's Sculpin, B/W Dali Lama, White Home Invader Purple String Leech, Moorish Medusa
August	Mayflies	#10-14	Parachute Adams, Purple Haze, Yellow Humpy, Royal Wulff Improved Sparkle Dun, Hunchback March Brown, Missing Link, Film Critic
Cutthroat	Nymphs	#14-16	PT Nymph, Purple Jigged Psycho prince, Hares Ears Copper John, Purple Holo Point, Jiggy Caddis, Poopah
	Caddis	#12-14	Missing Link, E/C Caddis, Goddard Caddis, Elk Hair Caddis, Yellow Stimulator, Blooms Parachute Caddis
	Hoppers	#6-14	Hopper Grande, Morrish Hopper, Head Turner Hopper
	Beetles	#10-18	Hi-Vis Beetle, Carl's Cicada, Chubby Chernobyl
	Ants	#16-20	Hegan Ant, Carl's Foam Ant, Parachute Ant, Schlotter's Ant
	Streamers	#8-12	White BH Micro bugger, Silver BH Crystal Bugger, Tak's Mini Minnow

Guiding: Montana Fly Fishing Lodge float is a fully guided trip. Although the guides will be there to help you with fishing and casting, many of the guides are horseman, hunters and oarsmen first Beginner anglers can find the fishing difficult as they are sometime left on their own during parts of the trip. The trip is better suited for the self-sufficient angler who can get by on their own. Because there are so many fish, catching fish is rarely the issue, but having basic fishing skills, knot tying and all around fly fishing knowledge will go a long-ways in helping you while you are there.

Recommended Clothing and Equipment

Clothing:

The weather in Northwest Montana is constantly changing. One afternoon it may be 90° (+) and sunny, down right hot; then only a few hours later it may be windy and hailing. July and August are more stable month and typically high pressure, sunny and hot. You are typically dressing light and wearing sun protective clothing and trying to stay cool. Early and late season brings more unpredictable and cooler weather, so you should always plan for any possible weather. Clothing strategies should be based on the "layering system." By using the "layering system," anglers can adapt to whatever Mother Nature dishes out. The whole idea behind layering is to trap heated air (generated by your body and stored between the different layers of insulation), thus keeping you warm.

Here is the formula preferred by the staff at The Fly Shop®:

1... Base Layer: Start off with a synthetic fabric next to your skin. This often is a pair of thermal underwear (tops and bottoms) and they usually come in three weights: light, mid and expedition. According to your individual metabolism, pick what is best for you. Synthetic (non-cotton) materials retain little moisture and "wick" moisture away from your skin. This is very important when you are walking in waders or when outside temperatures heat up.

2... Thermal Layer: Your second layer of insulation should match the weather and conditions you are going to be fishing in. Lightweight insulation for cool weather, midweight for colder conditions and heavyweight for really frigid days. Fleece is an outstanding choice here in either tops and bottoms or overalls. Merino Wool is also a good choice as it stays warm when damp, though dries very slowly.

3... Outer Shell (Rain Jacket & Waders): Your final layer should be a breathable rain jacket and waders.

- 1 set light or mid weight – Patagonia, Simms, and others (tops and bottoms)
- 1 set heavyweight – Patagonia, Simms, and others (tops and bottoms)
- 1 layering jacket – A lighter weight jacket that can fit under your wading jacket or that can be used by itself

Rain Jacket:

High quality Gore-Tex® type products are the best. Your rain jacket should be 100% waterproof and breathable. Rain jackets must be seam sealed, multi-layered, of QUALITY construction and from a recognized outdoor clothing company. Jackets specifically designed for fly fishermen are the best. We have listed a few of our favorite brands below.

- Skwala
- Patagonia
- Simms

Wading Equipment:

Stocking foot, breathable waders are the only way to go. Neoprene waders are antiquated, do not permit moisture to escape, are heavy and cumbersome and only appropriate for sedentary fishing (float tubing) where insulation is the only concern. "Breathable" waders have totally revolutionized wading equipment. You will experience little or no moisture build-up inside the waders, even after a long hike; they wear like iron, and are comfortable to be in all day. Lastly, "Breathable" waders take up a fraction of the space neoprene waders take-up when packed in your duffel bag. All waders should be worn with synthetic fiber under-wader wear for maximum comfort, minimum moisture

retention, and warmth. For safety we strongly recommend wearing a wading belt at all times.

- Simms Waders
- Patagonia Waders
- Skwala Waders

On the hot summer days of July and August wet wading can be a great choice. This does not mean leave your waders at home, but a pair of wading socks and quick dry shorts is all the extra things you need and you will have the option to wet wade. After July 20 wet wading is the way to go.

Socks:

Anglers should bring enough socks to alternate on a daily basis. For a week's fishing trip, three pairs should be fine. Do not wear the same socks every day, but alternate, leaving one pair to dry and air while wearing the other set. Wool, polypro or a combination of both are the best choices in sock material. Try on your socks with your waders and wading boots before you leave for your trip to ensure that you have plenty of room to move your toes. Being unable to move your toes and cramping of your feet in your wading boots are the biggest reasons for numb toes and cold feet. We've experienced great success with the disposable air-activated heating pads available at many outdoor stores. Removal from the cellophane wrapper activates them and they then simply stick to the outside of socks for hours of cozy warmth.

- 3 pair of Wading Socks

Wading Boots:

Felt soled wading boots are highly recommended as they offer superior ankle support and are exceptional for hiking to and from waters. Felt is still allowed in Montana. Simms, Patagonia and Korkers make some good models to consider. Korkers are nice because you can change out felt soles for rubber, or studs depending on each situation. Gravel guards are a must. Make sure if you are bringing felt wading boots, they are clean and dry to prevent the spread of invasive species.

- Korkers Wading Boots
- Simms Wading Boots
- Patagonia Wading Boots

Wool or Polypropylene Gloves:

For Early and late season, fingerless gloves are great for cold and or rainy days. Neoprene gloves are fine, but retain a lot of water when wet. We have had the best success with synthetic or wool gloves.

- Simms Half-Finger Gloves or Flip-Mitt Gloves.

Fishing Vest or Tackle/Vest Pack:

For vests, we like high quality products that offer options. Many of the best new vests can be attached to your favorite backpack, sling or pack. Choose one that has room for a rain jacket, or camera in the back. Brands we like are Patagonia, Simms and Fishpond. If you prefer a tackle pack, take a good look at Fishpond, Patagonia, or Simms.

Waterproof Luggage

Waterproof duffels are essential for the wilderness float trip because all baggage is exposed to the elements as you float between camps, and the rafts are Self-Bailers, meaning water comes in just as easy as it goes out. As you move from camp to camp, the guides try to keep the luggage off the bottom of the boat, but luggage can shift and your bag can sit in water. The Fly Shop offers our

own "Submarine River Duffel," a fully submersible, waterproof bag designed specifically for floats of this nature and built for us in the USA. A cheaper option is made by Outcast that is a tad bit smaller but does perform well and keeps gear dry.

Within the main bag, it is advisable to sub-pack your gear into smaller waterproof bags inside your primary waterproof duffel: clothing in one, sleeping bag in another, fishing gear in another, etc. This makes gear organization simple, and also serves as a backup just in case of leaks in your main bag.

MWL can provide you with a waterproof duffel for the Wilderness Float if needed. Please let us know if you are going to need one.

For the lodge stay, you will have your cabin for storing gear, therefore do not need the waterproof duffel; typical rolling duffels are sufficient.

For the float: Please use a soft bag or nylon duffel bag up to 15" diameter so that it can be stuffed into our dry bags or packed on horses. ***If you plan on traveling with a hard-sided bag or a bag with rollers, you must pack another simple soft duffel inside to repack into as roller bags cannot go on the mules.

Small Day Pack:

This can be an important article to include while packing. We like a waterproof, top-loader day pack that can hold extra gear, clothes, flies, camera, lunch, etc.

Floatant:

This is the land of Dry Fly Fishing. If there is one item you should bring to help yourself out, it is Dry Fly Dressing. Gink, Loon, Umpqua all make great floatants that will do the job and help the guide out when you are out of reach.

Boat Bag:

A waterproof boat "dry bag" can be extremely handy for storing extra clothes, tackle and camera equipment while on a raft. The whitewater type "dry bags" are the best.

Fishing Hat:

July and August in Montana can be clear and bright with lots of sun. A good hat to keep the glare off your eyes and the sun off your face is imperative. Look for a hat that is comfortable and that has a good size brim.

Line clippers, Pliers, Hemostats, & Hook File:

These are essential to any fisherman and should not be left behind.

Polarized Sunglasses:

Fly fishing is often a very visual experience. Spotting the fish is part of the excitement, and part of the challenge. Good quality polarized sunglasses are a must. Polarized sunglasses not only let you spot fish more effectively, but also protect your eyes from the intense sunlight experienced in Montana, as well as hooks. Costa and Smith make some of the best in the industry.

Camera:

Waterproof digital or splash-proof digital cameras are handy. If you are going to take your digital SLR camera, make sure you have a waterproof case for it. The best waterproof cases we have found to protect expensive camera equipment are made by Pelican Products, www.pelican.com. Don't forget your flash unit.

Headlamp:

This is mandatory for the float. Our favorite is one of the Petzel headlight models with an LED bulb(s).

Sun Protection:

The summer weather in Montana is generally pleasant with average temperatures ranging between the low 60's and mid 90's. Wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and frequent use of sun block (SPF 30+ UVA/UVB) are highly recommended. Sun gloves will save the backs of your hands.

Bug Repellent:

Bugs can be rather bothersome in Northwest Montana especially in the early season (May-Late June). Even throughout the summer there are spots where Mosquitos are a nuisance and a bottle of bug dope with active ingredient DEET is a must have in your tackle bag.

Camp Shoes:

After a long day of fishing, it's nice to get out of your waders and slip into a comfortable pair of shoes to wear around the lodge or camp. Crocs are a great choice and super lightweight.

Wading Staff:

If you use a wading staff on your home waters, then bring it, it will come in handy.

Towels/Toiletry:

We recommend guests bring one bath towel and two hand towels for a "river shower" and washing you up in the mornings or before dinner. Dr. Bronner's soap commonly used by backpackers is great to wash up, and also do some quick laundry with in the river after a few days in the same shirt.

We also recommend bringing some facial wipes to help get the sunscreen or DEET off.

Sleeping bag/Pillow:

They will provide sleeping bags and pillows so you don't need to bring one. Many people prefer to use their own, so if you want to bring a sleeping bag preferably a 20 Degree down bag that is compressible. Please don't bring the big bulky Coleman style sleeping bags. A small camp pillow that is inflatable is the best because of space.

Water Bottle:

It is a must to bring your own water bottle. They will have plenty of water on the floats but it is advised that you bring your own re-usable water bottle. If you are in need of one we do recommend the Klean Kanteen as they offer several different cup styles and sizes as well as several different lid options.

Gratuities:

Gratuities are a personal decision based on services rendered. Normally, guides are tipped daily as you may have a different guide each day. We recommend that you tip your guide on a daily basis, somewhere in the nature of \$75 - \$100 per day, per boat/guide (usually shared between two anglers). For the lodge staff, (chefs, housekeeping, wait staff, etc.) we recommend \$50 per day per person. If you have any questions concerning gratuities, please feel free to call or ask the lodge owner for guidelines.

As soon as you have your flight schedule finalized to Montana please forward it to us at travel@theflyshop.com , so that we can coordinate your transfer to the lodge.

Fishing licenses

Please purchase your Montana fishing license online at [CLICK HERE](#) , prior to your trip. Non-Resident Anglers 0-9 years old do not need a license.

If fishing during Bull Trout Season (June-July 31), you will need a Bull Trout Catch card which is only available by mail. It is possible to get a catch card from the Ranger Station down the road. However, in the case of the ranger station not being open or something happening we prefer that people either mail in beforehand or they get one in town before coming up to the lodge.

[Bull Trout Catch Card Click Here](#)

Contact numbers**Montana Wilderness Lodge**

National Forest Develop Rd,
Hungry Horse, MT 59919
406-404-6354

Rich Mcatee C-406-249-6501

Lodge email: montanawildernesslodge@gmail.com

Anita Newlan - 406-270-2980

Lodge GPS Coordinates:	47°56'34.39"N 113°33'23.62"W
Float GPS Coordinates Trailhead -	47°49'56.94"N 113°25'12.75"W
Float GPS Coordinates-Big Prairie Ranger Station	47°30'19.82"N 113°14'29.52"W

The Fly Shop®

800-669-3474 • BUS. 530-222-3555

(Open 7 days a week, 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.) E-mail: travel@theflyshop.com

Communications:

The Montana Wilderness Lodge is located on the upper end of Hungry Horse Reservoir in a remote part of the state. There is no cell service for most of the drive up the 1.5 hours of gravel road and no service at the lodge. Verizon has spotty cell service on a couple of places on the drive,

but very inconsistent. There is emergency WIFI at the lodge if necessary, as it very slow and only good for sending a quick text or email. There is a land line that you are free to use to contact the outside world. Guides will have a satellite phone on the float but it is only used in an emergency situation.

Electricity:

Lodge: There is no electricity in the cabins. There are lights in the cabin but are run off of Propane. There are plugins in the Lodge where you can charge items when the generator is running. This is typically during meal times.

Float: Being in such a remote area of Montana and with limited resources, there is no electricity on the float. Most guests wanting to charge a cell phone, for camera use, will need to bring battery packs, 2 will typically work if you keep your phone on airplane mode. Another way to charge your phone is with a backpacking solar panel. Goal Zero makes some great ones.

Alcohol:

Wine is included with dinner. **If you would like more** wine, beer or hard alcohol please bring or purchase this before your arrival at the Trailhead. Due to the remote nature, they are trying to keep weight to 50 pounds/person.

Dining

Wilderness Dining:

You will eat breakfast and dinner each day in the open air with a tent fly to keep the weather out and lunches are served streamside with your guides. Lunch with a view... Meals are often cooked in cast iron over an open fire and many delicious dinners are prepared in foil and cooked in the coals of these fires. Steaks and spaghetti are some of the favorites, so don't plan on going hungry.

Lodge:

The Cook at the lodge is ready to show you their wonderful freshly prepared, home-style meals. From freshly made charcuterie boards when you get off the river to homemade lasagna and baked chicken parmesan are just a couple of signature dishes. They create mouthwatering, meat-based dinners on their pellet grill such as "Bacon bomb" and classic smokey dry rubbed ribs that will not disappoint.

Checklist

Must have Items

- Airline Tickets and this travel planner
- Addresses & phone numbers
- Destination address
- Valid Passport or Real ID
- Wallet (Cash for Tips and Credit Cards)
- Polarized Sunglasses
- Headlamp
- Waders
- Wading Belt
- Wading Boots (Felt Recommended)
- Wading Socks (For Wet wading)
- Toilet Articles
- Prescription Medications
- Aspirin
- Rain Jacket
- Light Socks
- Heavy Socks
- Quick Dry Pants
- Quick Dry Shorts
- Belt
- Shirts
- Undershirts, under shorts
- Under-wader wear
- Light pile or fleece pants
- Fishing Hat or stocking cap
- Fleece or Layering jacket/pullover
- Long-sleeved Fishing shirts
- Short-sleeved Shirts
- Sun Screen SPF 30+
- Lip Balm & hand lotion
- Insect Repellent
- Waterproof Duffle (Float)
- Heavy Draw String Trash bags (2) (Float)
- Pair of Jeans (For riding horse) (Float)
- Hiking boots for riding/hiking
- Flushable Cottonelle wipes (Float)
- Bath Towel, 2 hand towels (Float)

Other Items

- Flask
- Smart phone
- Fly Rods
- Fly Reels
- Spare Spools, Spare Lines
- Leaders
- Tippet
- Fly boxes (Dries, Streamers, Nymphs)
 - Floatant
- Indicators
- Clippers, Pliers, Scissors
- Fishing Vest/Tackle Pack
- Day Pack, Tackle Bag
- Hook file or Stone
- Knot Tool
- Hemostats
- Split shot
- Zip-Lock bags
- Buffs
- Fishing Gloves
- Pen and Pencil
- Reading Book
- Water Bottle (Hydroflask or GrayL)
- Reading Glasses
- Extra pair of Sunglasses
- Camera, battery charger, storage cards
- Tape measure
- Small Binoculars
- Gel-padded cycling shorts (Float)
- Dr Bronner's Soap
- Sleeping bag (optional for Float)
- Camp Pillow (optional for Float)