

MISSION VALLEY

Mission Valley

Polson, Ronan, Pablo & St. Ignatius

HEALTHCARE • EDUCATION • ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
RECREATION & ATTRACTIONS • HISTORY • RESOURCES



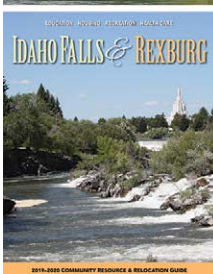
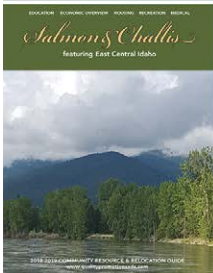
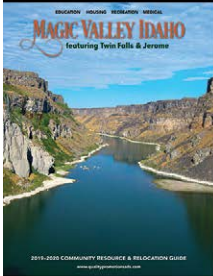
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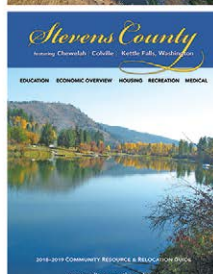
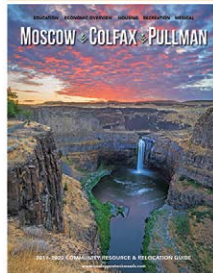
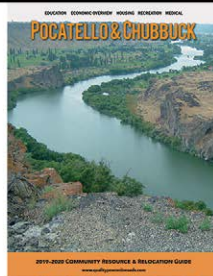


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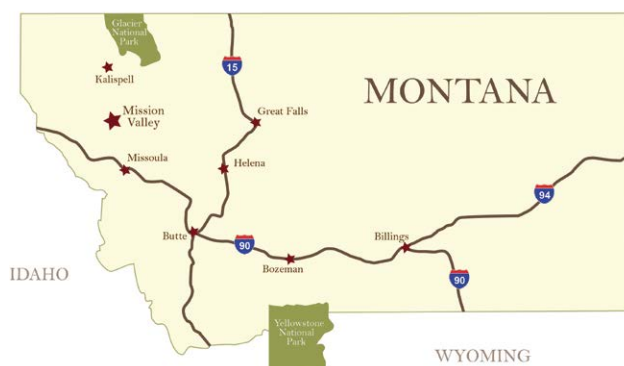
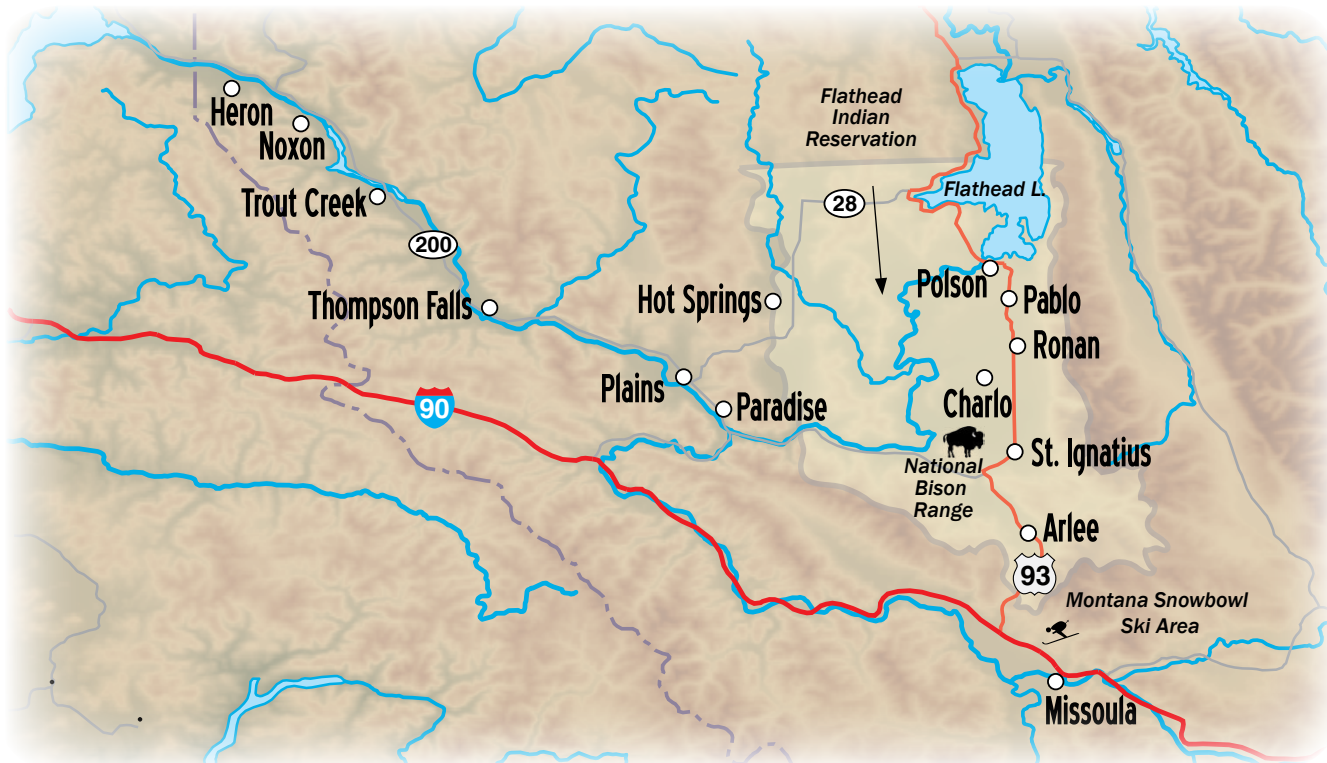


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WELCOME TO THE MISSION VALLEY

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COMBINE MAGNIFICENT SCENERY, temperate climate, abundant lakes, streams and wetlands, lush forests, rich farmlands and well developed communities and you have the Mission Valley. The valley is nestled against the rugged and unsurpassed beauty of the 10,000 foot high Mission Mountain Range in the northwestern portion of Montana. Flathead Lake, the largest natural fresh water lake west of the Mississippi, is the last remnant of Glacial Lake Missoula and the centerpiece of the valley. This fertile basin known as the Mission Valley abounds with natural resources such as several wildlife refuges, and the Flathead River, which is harnessed by the massive Kerr Dam, 54 feet higher than Niagara Falls.

Commerce and industry in the area are headed by a strong agricultural base and the timber industry. Lake County ranks third

in the number of farms in Montana and fourth in the number of cattle ranches. Valley residents contribute to the local economy by raising cattle and sheep and growing crops such as hay, table and seed potatoes, small grains, apples and the famous Flathead cherries.

The valley boasts three of the finest golf courses in the Northwest with the longest golf season in Montana. Theater and art galleries are located throughout the valley. There are several museums to discover the proud cultural heritage of the Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation and the colorful history of homesteaders, steam boaters, cattle ranchers, and other key figures in the area's growth.

The Mission Valley, with its cultural amenities, unsurpassed recreation, scenic wonders, and outstanding quality of life is a fine compliment to Montana's reputation of "The Last Best Place."

St. Ignatius Mission. MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM PHOTO



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COMMUNITY PROFILE

CLIMATE

The Mission Valley residents enjoy relatively moderate climates both in summer and winter due to the influence of the Pacific Northwest weather patterns and the stabilizing effect of the lake.

Because of the flow of moist air during winter, it is not uncommon to see the valley blanketed in snow, but rarely do the residents experience the harsh and bitter cold of the northeastern parts of the country.

Spring brings most of the moisture in the form of light, almost daily rain showers, whereas summers are generally dry and warm, as the semiarid landscape will show. The cooler summer evenings are welcomed when the temperatures do reach above 90° during the height of the summer. This is an ideal valley for such crops that prefer warm days and cool nights.

Elevation: 3,000-3,300 ft.

Period	Avg. Min.	Avg. Mean	Avg. Max.
January	18.1	24.8	31.4
April	33.4	44.6	55.8
July	51.7	67.0	82.2
October	35.4	45.9	56.4

Average Annual Precipitation: 19.1 inches

Average Growing Season: 130 days

Average Annual Temperature: 56.5°

POPULATION

	2010	2018 (estimate)
Lake County	28,947	29,758
Polson	4,488	4,929
Ronan	1,817	2,080
St. Ignatius	842	838

Source: WorldPopulationReview.com

Lake County was formed in 1923 by the state of Montana, with the county seat named as Polson. By 1930 the population of Lake County had risen to 9,541 and continued to rise until it stabilized between 13,000 and 14,000 between 1940 and 1960. Since 1990 it has experienced a high growth rate as the 5th fastest growing area in the state, growing 26% to 26,507 in 2000. While Lake County is currently the 9th largest county in Montana the population expansion has stabilized once again with an estimated 29,099 residents in the county, up only 8.9% since 2000.

LAKE COUNTY HOUSING 2018

Homes For Rent	\$825-\$1,600
Apartments For Rent	\$625-\$900
Homes For Sale	\$299,000-\$450,000

Source: Zillow.com



Kayaking on Flathead Lake

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The Lake County Courthouse in Kalispell

GOVERNMENT

Lake County is governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners who are elected to staggered six year terms, with a chairman selected annually by the commissioners from amongst themselves. There are approximately 135 full-time and another 75 part-time employees on the county's payroll. Most county offices are located in the courthouse in Polson, that serves as the County Seat. Each of the incorporated cities has a mayor-city council form of government and provides administrative, police, code enforcement and public works services. Polson and Ronan have zoning ordinances and Polson has a master plan in place. All three communities have public libraries, funded in part by the city taxes. Some of the public services, such as law enforcement, have overlapping jurisdictions between county, city and tribal agencies.

The Tribal Government is composed of ten council representatives elected by enrolled Tribal members from reservation districts. A chairman elected from the council by council members. Main Tribal Administration offices are located in Pablo. Other Tribal entities in Lake County include Best Western KwaTaqNuk Resort and Casino at Flathead Bay, Salish Kootenai College, Mission Valley Power, Salish Kootenai Housing Authority, S&K Technologies, and S&K Electronics. The Tribe is one of the leaders in the nation in contracting programs with Federal Government, and manages more than 100 Federal & State Programs on the reservation.

TOP PRIVATE EMPLOYERS

St. Joseph Hospital
 St. Luke Community Hospital
 Mission Mountain Enterprises
 New Jore Corporation
 Super 1 Foods
 Wal-Mart
 Designs For Health
 Safeway
 Mission Valley Power
 Evergreen Healthcare
 McDonald's of Polson and Ronan
 Glacier Bank
 Valley Bank
 Western Building Center
 Black Mountain Software

Source: Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

(Population 25 years and older)

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	LAKE COUNTY	MONTANA	US
<High School Diploma	11.8%	8.3%	14.4%
HS Diploma (or equivalent)	32.5%	29.9%	28.5%
Some College	24.9%	25.1%	21.3%
Associate's Degree	8.4%	7.9%	7.6%
Bachelor's Degree	14.2%	19.8%	17.7%
Graduate or Prof. Degree	8.2%	9.0%	10.4%

LAKE COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

	AVG. ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT	ANNUAL WAGES PER JOB
Total All Industries	8,104	\$30,279
Total Private	5,330	\$27,886
Agriculture	128	\$25,124
Mining	21	\$36,976
Utilities	6	*
Construction	423	\$27,486
Manufacturing	577	\$30,727
Wholesale Trade	111	\$37,368
Retail Trade	1,069	\$23,390
Trans./Warehousing	60	\$21,448
Information	135	\$49,842
Finance & Insurance	218	\$33,057
Real Estate &		
Rental & Leasing	74	\$26,400
Professional &		
Technical Services	201	\$37,048
Management of		
Companies & Enterprises	21	\$40,955
Administrative &		
Waste Services	90	\$27,933
Educational Services	39	\$26,409
Health Care and		
Social Assistance	1,137	\$34,001
Arts, Entertainment,		
Recreation	70	\$14,295
Accommodations &		
Food Services	634	\$11,507
Other Services	224	\$17,851
Total Government	2,774	\$34,876
Local Government	2,597	\$34,177
State Government	73	\$53,895
Federal Government	104	\$39,037

UTILITIES & SERVICES

Electric Power Utility

Mission Valley Power (MVP) is operated by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes under contract to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). MVP services all of Lake County within the reservation borders. Pablo 675-7900, 883-7900 (natural gas not available)
 Residential: Basic Charge \$5.00/month
 Energy Charge: \$0.04739/kwh; Min. Monthly Bill: \$10/month



The south shore of Flathead Lake

Water & Sewer Facilities

Although there are several community water systems serving residential areas, the communities of Polson, Ronan, St. Ignatius, Pablo and Charlo provide public water systems accessible by industrial customers.

Economic Development

- Mission Valley One-Stop Workforce Center:
417-B Main Street, Polson, MT 59860, Ph: (406) 883-7880, Fax:
(406) 883-4564, www.jsd.dli.mt.gov/local/polson
- Lake County Community Development Corp.: 407 Main Street SW,
PO Box 128, Ronan MT 59864, (406) 676-5901
www.lakecountycdc.org
- Business Expansion And Retention (BEAR): Contact: Gib Turner,
(406) 676-5901, E-mail: busofficer@ronan.net

Newspapers

- Char-Koosta News: PO Box 98, Pablo, MT 59855
(406) 675-2830, fax: (406) 675-2831
E-mail: charkoosta@cskt.org, www.charkoosta.com
- Lake County Leader: PO Box 1090, Polson MT 59860
(406) 883-4343, www.leaderadvertiser.com
- Valley Journal Newspaper, PO Box 326, Ronan MT 59864
(406) 676-8989 fax: (406) 676-8990
E-mail: vjmail@valleyjournal.net
Web: www.valleyjournal.net

HOUSING

Average Household Income: \$49,275
Median Household Income: \$38,732
Percent Increase/Decrease in Income Since 2000: 34%
Percent Increase/Decrease in Income Since 2010: 4%
Average Household Net Worth: \$385,833
Median Home Sale Price: \$220,200
Sales Tax Rate: 0%
Average Household Total Expenditure: \$43,216

Single-family new house construction building permits

2007: 98 buildings, average cost: \$187,200
2008: 38 buildings, average cost: \$177,700
2009: 17 buildings, average cost: \$156,100
2010: 21 buildings, average cost: \$230,600
2011: 20 buildings, average cost: \$177,700
2012: 24 buildings, average cost: \$233,200
2013: 19 buildings, average cost: \$146,000
2014: 13 buildings, average cost: \$202,700

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HEALTHCARE

St. Luke Community Healthcare

Called the HEART of the Mission Valley, St. Luke Community Healthcare delivers complete care for all stages of life from birth to extended elderly care.

The Emergency Department at the 25-bed Ronan hospital is staffed with board certified physicians on-site, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and handles nearly 9,000 ER visits per year.

In addition, St. Luke also provides a walk-in convenient care clinic that is designed for those who cannot get in to see their regular doctor but who do not require an emergency room visit.

The St. Luke Surgery Center offers same-day or in-patient OB/GYN, Endoscopic and Laparoscopic procedures in addition to cosmetic, cataract, reconstructive, orthopedic and general surgery. St. Luke employs a full-time general surgeon providing a broad range of surgical procedures, as well as a full-time orthopedic surgeon who specializes in joint replacement, sports medicine, arthroscopic surgery and general orthopedics right here at home so that patients do not have to leave the valley for any planned procedures.

Fourteen experienced dedicated, primary care providers at the three network-owned clinics in Ronan, St. Ignatius and Polson take

a special interest in and personal approach to obstetrics, women's health, geriatrics, adult medicine, cardiovascular medicine, pediatrics and preventive medicine. All three clinics provide laboratory and x-ray services. Cardiology, urology, nephrology, neurology, neurosurgery and OB/GYN specialists visit the clinics on a monthly basis.

St. Luke's imaging department includes nuclear medicine, the first and only of its kind in the Mission Valley, as well as a Discovery bone densitometry system. These are just the latest additions to the state-of-the-art technology at the Ronan hospital, which also offers 80-slice CT scanning, digital mammography and mobile MRI services in addition to 3D/4D ultra-sound imaging. All aspects of the healthcare network are tied together by the advanced digital Picture Archiving Communication System (PACS) that gives pro-

viders instant access to diagnostic images generated anywhere in the network.

St. Luke Community Oxygen and Durable Medical Equipment delivers oxygen supplies and quality durable medical equipment from walkers to hospital beds. In addition, certified therapists evaluate and care for patients with special respiratory needs. Cardiologists from the Montana Heart Center are on-site at St. Luke each month to assist patients requiring cardiac rehabilitation.

The only community owned healthcare facility in the valley also has an extensive, physical therapy and fitness center; plus, a 75-bed extended care facility that includes a transitional care unit and adult day care. Sleep studies, audiology, women's rehabilitation, occupational therapy and speech therapy add to the complete range of services available through St. Luke.

St. Luke also offers a free service; Nurse on Call that connects callers to an around the clock nurse staffed call center that offers answers and advice to medical questions. Nurse on Call can be reached by calling 406-676-3737.

With a complete continuum of care, St. Luke continues to be the overwhelming number-one choice for healthcare services in the Mission Valley.

For more information, visit the St. Luke website at www.stluke-healthcare.org.

The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes offer a variety of health care services to its membership through clinics located in Arlee, St. Ignatius, Ronan, and Polson. Indian Health Service contracts with various private providers to offer inpatient and referral care.

R&R Health Care Solutions located inside Harvest Foods in Ronan, is a locally owned and operated pharmacy. In addition to dispensing traditional prescriptions, the company offers a broad range of health care services including adult immunizations and compounding.

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MISSION VALLEY SCHOOLS

Polson High School is a modern comprehensive school serving 535 students (9-12). Student/teacher ratio: 17.8. PHS utilizes the latest technology available to ensure the highest quality education and the best opportunities for students. Regular and advanced placement courses in core subjects are part of the school program along with a variety of elective classes. PHS also offers programs for special needs students and those needing extra academic assistance. 406-883-6351

ACT SCORES

Local	Composite score 21.6
State	Composite score 21.9
National	Composite score 21.1

67 out of 120 seniors completed the ACT test

AFTER GRADUATION

48%	Four Year College or University
25%	Two Year college
5%	College of Technology
6%	Military
16%	Work

PERSONNEL

34.5 Certified Teachers
2 Counselors
1 Librarian
2 Administrators
.25 Speech Therapist
.25 Special Education Director
.5 School Nurse
12 Support Staff

Polson Middle School includes grades 5–8 and serves 601 students. Student/teacher ratio: 5-6: 19.5; 7-8: 17.7. It is Polson's newest school. The school includes two computer labs and a well-equipped library. 406-883-6335

Cherry Valley Elementary is a primary elementary school (K-4), 310 students. Staff includes 18 full-time certified teachers, 4 shared, and 12 aides assisting in classrooms. CVE is also staffed by the district psychologist, a social worker and a full-time speech pathologist. Student/teacher ratio for K:16; 1 & 2nd grades: 21; 3-4th grades: 22. A complete library and media center is located within the school. 406-883-6333.

Linderman Elementary School (K - 4th grade) serves 301 students. Staff includes 19 full-time, two part-time and three shared, certified teachers. Five instructional aides also work with students. Student/teacher ratio: 14.7. 406-883-6229

Ronan High School serves 446 students in grades 9 through 12. Staff includes 25 teachers with a Student/teacher ratio: 17.8. 406-676-3390

Ronan Elementary School serves 1,085 students in grades K-8. Staff includes 72.4 teachers with a student/teacher ratio of 15. 406-676-3390

St. Ignatius Elementary and High School serves 595 students. Staff includes 50.6 teachers with a student/teacher ratio: 11.8.

Two Eagle River School, Bureau of Indian Affairs funded school, fully accredited, operated by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes; approximately 150 students; 406-675-0292

Average Student/Teacher Ratio in Lake County is 15:1

Average ACT Scores in 2001: 21.5

Polson School District: 406-883-6355; www.polson.k12.mt.us

Charlo

Charlo Elementary serves 148 students

Charlo 7-8 serves 44 students

Charlo High School serves 102 students; 406-644-2206

Private schools

Mission Valley Christian Academy, K-12. Ronan 676-3822

Glacier View Christian School, K-9. Ronan 676-5142



The running track at Polson High School



Ronan Middle School



Polson Middle School

Salish Kootenai College

Salish Kootenai College is a tribally controlled institution chartered in 1977 by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. SKC is located in Pablo, the heart of the Flathead Indian Reservation in the scenic Mission Valley of northwestern Montana.

Since its foundation, SKC has provided educational programs that meet the unique needs of American Indian students. The college has also taken a leadership role in preserving the cultural heritage of the Tribes. The rich cultural, geographic, and academic environment affords opportunities for engagement in creative and intellectual activities. Many faculty members are involved in research in areas such as surface water-ground water interactions of the Jocko River Floodplain, control of noxious weeds, heavy metals in the food web, and the relationship between culturally congruent instruction and student achievement in science.

SKC offers programs leading to Bachelor's Degrees, Associate Degrees, and Certificates of Completion. A diverse student population of about 1,200 includes individuals from 20 states and provinces as well as representatives of about 65 different tribes. SKC also offers adult basic education, continuing and community education, and short-term training programs. The SKC Extension Office, KSKC TV, and the Center for Prevention and Wellness are also located on campus.

College facilities consist of 20 major buildings situated on 128 forested acres. Main academic buildings include six classroom buildings housing the academic departments and twenty academic labs including computer labs. The D'Arcy McNickle Library serves as academic library for the College and tribal library for the Flathead Reservation. The library contains over 60,000 items and is a Federal and State Depository Library. The Joe McDonald Health Education Center houses a state of the art gymnasium, commercial kitchen, classrooms, and fully equipped fitness center. The 210-seat Johnny Arlee/Victor Charlo Theater Auditorium provides a venue for performing arts and other campus and community events.

The SKC Foundation was established in 1988 to support the mission, vision, and strategic direction of Salish Kootenai College. The financial support provided by the Foundation enhances the academic excellence of the College and builds the legacy of this outstanding institution. The Foundation is a charitable non-profit organization under Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) designations. Donations made through the Foundation provide funding for scholarships, buildings and facilities, faculty positions and more.

SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE PHOTO



CHANGE, GROW, LEAD, SUCCEED.

Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana offers forty-four degree programs and certificates. From sciences to education to health care, SKC's degrees provide you the opportunity to find your career path.

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MISSION VALLEY COMMUNITIES

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A cherry orchard on the shore of Flathead Lake

POLSON

Construction of several new condominiums along the lakeshore, along with new housing developments has attracted persons from all over the country to this amazingly beautiful area. Polson has a healthy and rich cultural community with festivals, art shows, theater, county fairs, trade shows, and rodeos. There are numerous museums and art galleries for stimulating outings. The Sandpiper Gallery (an all-volunteer, fine arts, non-profit corporation) hosts Art Days in August when hundreds of local and traveling artists come to display their talent. Polson's biggest event takes place in July when 300 teams compete in the 3 on 3 basketball tournament. Polson also hosts the largest car show in the Pacific Northwest. The Mission Valley Cruisers boast 500 hot rods, custom and classic, that line the streets during August. The compact downtown section is a mixture of both historic and newer buildings housing a variety of unique shops. Fine dining overlooking the lake can be enjoyed in several of Polson's delightful restaurants.

The town's close proximity to Flathead Lake makes for a relative mild climate year-round, along with a healthy growing season. During summers the temperatures range from 80 to 95 degrees, a comfortable temperature as there is a usually a nice breeze off the lake. The landscape is semi-arid with pine, fir, spruce and tamarack forests. This charming lakeside community is the trading center for one of Montana's most fertile farming areas. The surrounding farms raise such crops as hay, wheat and some of the nation's best certified seed potatoes. The area also produces the famous Flathead sweet cherries.... a true bonus for visitors and locals alike. Thousands of cherry trees burst into bloom in the spring, announcing the beginning of another wonderful season. During summer, roadside stands along the east shore offer a variety of locally grown cherries, apples, plums, and other fruits and homegrown vegetables.

City Hall: 106 First Street. Polson, MT 59860 (406) 883-8200

Recreation is at its finest in the Polson area. With over 185 miles of shoreline, residents can enjoy boating, water skiing, swimming and fishing right in their own backyard. The Polson Golf Course overlooking Flathead Lake is one of Montana's most scenic courses enjoying the longest season in Western Montana. Polson boasts several multi-



A houseboat on Flathead Lake. PHOTO COURTESY CLICK HERE DESIGNS

use city parks located on the lake with swimming, playgrounds, and water sports available.

Polson city parks

Boettcher, on Flathead Lake, has picnic tables, swimming area, playground, restrooms and showers, concession stand, volleyball and horseshoe pits.

City Docks are open for fishing, boat launching, docking and trailer parking.)

Ducharme, located along Hwy 93, has outstanding lake views and picnic tables.

Mission Bay Park is a small park located in the Mission Bay development. Playground equipment only.

O'Malley Park consists of an American Legion baseball field, Little League baseball field, concession stand, basketball court, swings, horseshoe pits, picnic tables and restrooms.

Pomajevich Park offers a baseball field, playground and restrooms. Sports Complex (Kerr Dam Field) has soccer fields, two softball fields, basketball courts, playground, picnic tables and restrooms.



Polson City Docks

Sacagawea Park, on Flathead Lake, offers picnic tables, benches and restrooms.

Riverside Park, on the Flathead River, includes a swimming area, boat launch ramp, playground, picnic tables, volleyball court and restrooms.

PABLO

This community was a booming town until the early 1920s when it was nearly destroyed by fire. Pablo continues to grow and to be an essential part of the valley. The town was named after pioneer cattle and buffalo rancher Michel Pablo. Government offices of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are located in Pablo. Pablo is also home to the Salish Kootenai College, established in 1977. The Sqelixw/Aq̓smakni•k Cultural Center takes its name from the Salish and Kootenai languages meaning “the Peoples.” The “People’s Center” was officially established in 1990. The facility lies north of Pablo on Highway 93 and includes exhibits, collections of the Salish, Kootenai and the Pend d’Orielle people, a learning center and gift shop. The center tells the native story and shows the way of life as it has passed from generation to generation. Pablo is unincorporated.



Salish Kootenai tribal headquarters in Pablo

ST. IGNATIUS

Lake County’s oldest town, founded in 1854 by Jesuit Missionaries, St. Ignatius spawned the growth area for the valley, claiming the first residence school for Indians, first hospital, first saw mill and first flour mill in the state.

Some of the valley’s best hiking and fishing recreational areas are minutes from town. St. Mary’s Lake, Mission Falls, and McDonald Lake are within a short distance. The St. Ignatius community offers many of the services you would normally find in larger cities. These include a satellite clinic (St. Luke Community Health Care), library, community center w/exercise equipment, senior citizens center, one elementary and one high school, two city parks, an amphitheater, three sports fields, two tennis courts, fairgrounds, two community



Main Street In St. Ignatius



Downtown Ronan

health centers, a police department and volunteer fire and ambulance service, seven churches, museums, restaurants, and retail stores. All of this is within close proximity to the National Bison Range.

City Hall: Box 103, St. Ignatius 59865, 406-745-3791

RONAN

Ronan is a small town of about 3,000 area residents located in center of the Mission Valley. Named in 1885 after Major Peter Ronan, Superintendent of the Flathead Indian Reservation, Ronan is the hub of agricultural activity in the Mission Valley. The town is adorned with the beauty of Mission Mountains and surrounded by various sources of fishing and wildlife habitat, and rolling farmland. All types of recreation are within easy reach of residents. The Mission Mountain Wilderness to the east offers fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, and horseback riding, hiking and camping. (Permits are required on Reservation lands.) Flathead Lake for water sports is about a half hour drive north. The community also offers a wealth of enjoyment and resources. Several retail and service businesses line the main corridor of this quaint town, with a lovely city park as the central attraction. The City Park features a grassy area with playground, benches, and a small stream, which is home to a variety waterfowl. Ronan has a public library, a new modern high school, an elementary school and community center. Garden of the Rockies Museum, police department, volunteer fire department and volunteer ambulance. St. Luke Community Health-care Network is located in Ronan. It is the only community owned healthcare facility in the Mission Valley, with a 75-bed extended care facility that includes a transitional care unit and adult day care. Ronan residents take delight in the celebration of annual events. Two such events include Pioneer Days in August and The Lake County Junior Fair, which is Montana’s only county fair, dedicated to the talents and achievements of young residents in the valley. It is held annually at Lake County Fairgrounds in Ronan July and August.

City Hall: 207 Main Street, Ronan 59864, 406-676-4231





HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS

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The Polson-Flathead Historical Museum features displays that depict the late 1800s and early 1900s are exhibited both inside the Museum building and in the spacious yard. In the Yard: Old buggies and wagons, a jail cell, farm equipment from old-time homesteads and a historic trading post (1881) that's been restored and contains other exhibits. In the Museum visitors can take a few minutes or a few hours and rub elbows with Flathead history, finding fascinating displays of the hardy valley homesteaders, the steamboaters, the cattle ranchers, the development of the City of Polson, as well as a pictorial history of the construction of Kerr Dam, area wildlife and Indian artifacts. 708 Main St., Polson. 406-883-3049

The Miracle of America Museum has the largest collection of antique artifacts in western Montana. It displays America's progress from the walking plow to walking on the moon. It features a logging tow boat, hand tools used in logging operations, military vehicles and equipment, a pioneer village with a log cabin, general store, school, firehouse, and shops. Located in Polson on Hwy. 93. 406-883-6804. www.cyberport.net/museum

The Polson Feed Mill was built about 1910, the mill is significant because of its historic associations with the development of Polson and Lake County. The building is a fine example of a wood frame and shiplap siding building once common to the area. 501 Main St., Polson. 406-883-5969

The Garden of the Rockies Museum features Native American exhibits as well as artifacts from earlier farm life in the valley. Located in the first church built in Ronan in the early 1900s—In the process of developing a cultural center building located in Ronan. 406-676-5210

Four Winds Historic Village and Indian Trading Post was built in the late 1870s and was the oldest continuously operated trading post in Montana. Four Winds houses artifacts that reflect the history and culture of the Flathead Indian Reservation and other North American Indian Tribes. Beads, hides and headdresses are among the authentic goods available along with old and new books about local Indian history. Located north of St. Ignatius, 406-745-4336

Doug Allard's Flathead Museum Trading Post in St. Ignatius displays one of the better known collections of Indian arts and crafts, from the Flathead & Kootenai tribes—also artifacts from other US and Canadian tribes along with a wildlife exhibit. 406-745-2951

The Ninepipes Museum of Early Montana was built in 1997, a beautiful new log and concrete structure adjacent to the Ninepipe Wildlife Refuge. The museum houses memorabilia of life in early Montana, including the Native American, the cowboy,



Doug Allard's Flathead Museum Trading Post

the trapper, the pioneer and others. The museum contains paintings of the West, done by the old masters and contemporary artists, a large collection of photographs, wildlife and transportation exhibits and much more. www.ninepipes.com

The People's Center on the Flathead Indian Reservation offers a unique opportunity to learn who the Salish, Pend d'Orielle and Kootenai people are, as they tell it. Experience history through the oral traditions as told by their elders, learn traditional lifeways and cultural arts from tribal members or take an "Interpretive Ed-venture" in natural history and see how the tribes manage the wildlife and natural resources today. It is more than a museum; it is a vital, living encounter with Native American culture, as centuries-old wisdom for living harmoniously with the earth is practiced and taught. Located in Pablo. 406-675-0160, www.peoplescenter.org



The People's Center on the Flathead Reservation

St. Ignatius Mission

St. Ignatius Mission was once a Roman Catholic Mission founded in 1854 by Fathers DeSmet, Hoecken, and Menestry, all of who were Jesuits. Native Indians and missionaries built this beautiful building constructed over 100 years ago entirely from local materials. The 58 vivid frescoes and murals painted on the walls and ceiling during the early years of this century, were designed and painted by brother Joseph Carignano. These magnificent murals from the old and new testament are worthy of European cathedrals. The church is located in St. Ignatius and open daily to visitors.

St. Ignatius Good Old Days

Good Old Days is an annual event that brings the community together each summer in mid to late July for a wide variety of events. Here is a line up of years past events. For current scheduling please check out www.stignatiusmt.com

Dessert Baking Contest: With an Adult and Junior Division (16 and under), entries range from classics like fudge, cake, cookies, and pies as well as other local flavored creations. At Good Old Day's Field.

Good Old Days' Barbecue: Local Chamber members serve up gourmet burgers, BBQ beef, potato salad, baked beans, fruit salad, ice cream, and a drink all for \$7.50 per adult and just \$5 for children under 12.

Big Toy: Big Toy entertainment provides full days of entertainment for children.

Free Family Concert

At Dusk Fireworks: Provided by Northwest Firework Displays, an awesome display starting at dusk.

Pancake Breakfast: At the Senior Citizens Center.

Annual Buffalo Run: ¼ and ½ marathons as well as a 7 mile run

Quilt Show: A large showing as well as sale and fabric flea market held near St. Ignatius.

Petting Zoo

Largest Parade in Lake County: See website for contact information if you are considering being a part of the action

Dog Races

Family Games: Free to all interested in egg races, water balloon toss, sprints, gunny sac races, and more.

BMX Bike Races: Chance to win a new BMX Bike, not to mention bragging rights.

Fly-In Breakfast: At the St. Ignatius Airport. Helicopter tours available to Mission Falls by Homestead Helicopters.

The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation

The tribes thrived on a 22-million-acre territory in what is now the Western United States and Canada. After their consent to the

1855 Hellgate Treaty, they reserved nearly 1.3 million acres for our exclusive use and benefit. The Reservation includes a portion of the Rocky Mountains, the southern half of Flathead Lake (the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi River), an extensive river corridor, forests, and wide variety of wildlife, fish and bird species. In 1935, the first Tribal Council was formed along with a constitution and a governance system that is still in place today. The first action by the new council was to stop 25 years of federal policy that both sold and gave away tribal lands with federal homesteading policies.

Today the tribes directly control and manage all Reservation natural resources through its Departments including Natural Resources, Forestry, Lands, and Cultural Preservation. Approximately 300 employees carry out the natural resource protection, planning and management. The Tribal government has pursued every opportunity to operate its own programs through the Indian Education and Self Determination Act. The role of the BIA has been greatly reduced as the Tribal govern-

ment has grown more sophisticated and has emerged as a national role model for self-determination Tribes.

The Salish, Kootenai and Pend d'Oreille have fought continually to preserve a rich cultural heritage that has sustained the people for thousands of years. Since initial contact, then signing the treaty, and coping with federal Indian policy, the Salish-Kootenai struggled against total assimilation into the mainstream culture. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai people began to fashion a unique blend of old and new that would perpetuate Tribal culture, preserve natural resources and provide economic well-being, for future generations. Today, under the guidance of Tribal Elders, a new generation celebrates the old ways while shaping opportunities for economic growth with wise use of all Tribal resources.

The Tribal government is the largest employer in Lake County with 1,200 employees, which does not include the nationally known Salish Kootenai College, which enrolls 1,000 students. The Tribal government infuses \$65 million annually into the area economy through a \$30 million payroll and \$35 million on vendor good and services. A recent report funded by the State of Montana showed that the Tribes contribute a whopping \$317 million to the Montana economy every year.

The Tribes have also launched two very successful technology companies, S&K Electronics and S&K Technologies. The Tribal gaming operation manages two casinos, Gray Wolf Peak and the Best Western KwaTaqNuk Resort and Casino on the south shore of Flathead Lake. The Tribes also manage the federally owned Mission Valley Power Company and founded a tribally owned and operated institution, Eagle Bank in Polson. The Peoples' Center, located along Highway 93 north of Pablo, offers a museum and gift shop filled with more information about the Salish and Kootenai Tribes.





A People of Vision

**Welcome to the homeland of
the Salish, Kootenai and
Pend d'Oreille Tribes on the
Flathead Indian Reservation**

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are the largest employer in Lake County with 1,200 employees serving a dozen departments that tend to natural resources, forests, lands, water and air quality along with law enforcement, tribal health and housing services. Of the 8,023 enrolled Tribal members, approximately 5,000 live on the reservation. The Tribal government is directed by a 10-member Council of elected officials. The Tribal headquarters are based in Pablo, with tribal offices spread across the reservation.



For more information on CSKT, please visit the Web site, www.cskt.org or visit The Peoples Center at www.peoplescenter.org. This reservation was formed in 1855 when Tribal leaders ceded millions of acres for the establishment of this 1.3 million acre reservation.





RECREATION & ATTRACTIONS

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POLSON

The majestic Mission Mountains provide an impressive backdrop for this lake side community, which hugs the southwest shores of Flathead Lake. A quaint town of about 5,000 residents, Polson swells to over 10,000 during the tourist season. Polson is county seat of Lake County and is the state's 16th largest city. Incorporated April 5, 1910, the town has a history of lumbering ranching and steamboats. The city was named after pioneer rancher David Polson. Residents enjoy a variety of retail shopping and services. A state of the art hospital, medical and dental facilities, modern retirement and nursing home facilities, new schools, a convention center, a regional airport, resort hotels, along with B &B's and guest ranches. A well-equipped library provides numerous services, including free Internet access, audio and videocassettes, youth programs, a community meeting room, multimedia room and equipment and an interlibrary program.

FLATHEAD LAKE

Flathead Lake is one of the 300 largest natural lakes in the world and is the largest natural freshwater lake in the western United States. Of those large lakes, Flathead is one of the cleanest. Studies at the Biological Station show that water quality in Flathead Lake is among the best in the world. The Lake has a maximum depth of 370 feet, is 15.5 miles wide and 23.3 miles in length. Flathead Lake has 161 miles of shoreline.

The Lake's major tributaries are the Flathead and Swan Rivers. Numerous small streams flow directly into the Lake at its shoreline, particularly on the wetter East Shore.

Kerr Dam is located at the outlet of Flathead Lake in Polson, at the southern end. Regulation of outflow by the dam maintains the Lake's level between 2,883 and 2,893 feet above sea level. Due to its massive volume and normally active winds over the surface Flathead Lake does not freeze over most winters, although the bays often have winter ice cover.

Open space on the shoreline includes the National Wildlife Refuge on the North Shore and State land managed by the Biological Station as refuge on the South Shore (Polson Bay).

Wildhorse Island, near Big Arm Bay, is the largest island in the lake, at 2,100 acres, and managed by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks as a wildlife refuge. It is noted for its herd of Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep and several wild horses. Native grasses and flowers are abundant.

The Bird Islands near The Narrows are State owned and are managed jointly by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Biological Station as a bird refuge. Geese, osprey, herons and eagles frequent the Bird Islands.

Flathead Lake Biological Station is currently operated as a year-round academic and research facility mainly dealing with aquatic studies. Average surface temperatures of the lake range from 2.3°C (36°F) in mid-January, to 13.5°C (56°F) in mid-June, to 20.3°C (68°F) in mid-August.

Of the 25 fish species most commonly found in the Flathead



A view of Polson from Flathead Lake

River-Lake ecosystem, 10 species are native and 15 have been introduced. The native species include redbside shiner, peamouth minnow, squawfish minnow, largescale sucker, longnose sucker, sculpin, bull trout, cutthroat trout, pygmy whitefish and mountain whitefish. Lake trout, lake whitefish and yellow perch are the most common non-natives and have increased in abundance since 1970 whereas native species have declined.

All manner of water sports are enjoyed upon Flathead Lake's 200 square miles of surface. Several state parks and lake shore communities have boat launches and marinas on the Lake. You can avail yourself of a boat tour or rent one of the many types of watercraft including canoes, kayaks, windsurfers, seadoos, sailing and fishing boats. Serious anglers can arm themselves with heavy-duty equipment and probe the 300-foot deep Flathead Lake for trophy sized catches. For license information, call MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 406-444-2535

Source: Melissa Holmes of Flathead Lake Biological Station



The Polson harbor



Great Blue Herons at the Ninepipes refuge

NINEPIPES & PABLO WILDLIFE REFUGES

Ninepipes Wildlife Refuge is situated five miles south of Ronan and Pablo Reservoir is three miles northwest of Pablo. These wetland areas were shaped by glacial activity approximately 12,000 years ago and the area surrounding the refuges is rolling and interspersed with several pothole wetlands.

These wetlands cover some 4500 acres of water, marsh, and up-land grasses and provide prime water fowl habitat for feeding, nesting and resting. Waterfowl are the most abundant inhabitants of the refuge; they may total 80,000 in the fall and 40,000 in the early spring. The most numerous nesting birds are Canada geese, snow geese, mallards, redheads, pintails, cormorants, blue herons, shovelers, mergansers, and coots. Almost 190 species have been observed. Photography and wildlife observation are encouraged. Along with the aforementioned waterfowl and birds, common loons and bald eagles are occasionally seen. Common mammals on the refuges are the meadow vole, muskrat, and striped skunk. Mink, badger, and porcupines have also been sighted.

THE NATIONAL BISON RANGE

By the turn of the century the wild bison had dwindled to near extinction in the US with only 20 of these animals known to exist. It was for this reason that US president Theodore Roosevelt and congress were

persuaded set aside lands for the preservation of the American bison. Three reserves were established between 1907 and 1909 to save this magnificent animal from complete extinction. The National Bison Range was one of these, and was established in 1908. There are now more than 140,000 bison in America with a large percentage of these in private herds. Currently 300 to 500 bison roam the 19,000 acres of the National Bison Range, which is a part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The range of steep hills and narrow canyons and river bottom is made up primarily of native Palouse prairie grasslands but includes forest and wetlands. Along with bison the range is home to herds of whitetail and mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, and pronghorns along with Rocky Mountain goats. The Range is located northwest of St. Ignatius.

KERR DAM

Standing 54 feet taller than Niagara Falls, Kerr Dam is the largest electrical generating power plant in Montana. The dam is 204 ft. high, 450 ft. long at the top, 100 ft. long at the base and contains 85,000 cubic yards of concrete. It produces power from Kalispell to Missoula. Kerr Dam is located eight miles south of Polson on the Flathead River, and plays an important role in the Mission Valley economy.



Kerr Dam



On the National Bison Range: A herd crossing a stream, and a display of elk antlers that greets visitors

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

The rugged northern section of the Montana Rockies is some of the most spectacular and pristine wilderness in the U.S. 1.2 million acres of jagged peaks carved by glacial ice, hanging valleys that end in towering cliffs and 300 ft. waterfalls, hundreds of species of trees, shrubs and wildflowers describe Glacier Park. Almost every species of wildlife native to Montana resides in the park, including grizzly, mountain goat and bighorn sheep, elk & moose.

The climate in this awe-inspiring park ranges from coastal rainforest in the west to high mountain desert in the east. Crystal clear mountain lakes and streams and backcountry hiking and horse trails abound in Glacier. The larger lakes in the park are Lake MacDonald and St. Mary's Lake.

The 52-mile Going to the Sun Highway winds through glacier-carved valleys and over the Continental Divide at Logan pass. The Going to the Sun may be the most scenic mileage in the world.



MONTANA SNOWBOWL

An extremist's dream, Snowbowl is located 12 miles northwest of Missoula. It features deep powdery bowls, and 2,600 feet of continuous vertical drop, with 35-plus trails of groomed runs. 20% beginner, 40% intermediate, 40% advanced, 950 skiable acres, 500 acres of tree skiing, 700 acres extreme. Longest run 3 miles. Two capacity double chairs, two surface lifts. Lift capacity 3,400 skiers/hr. Base 5,000 ft. Top 7,600 ft. Average annual snowfall 300 inches. Night skiing, rentals, sales, instructions and lodging. Events and racing. Snowbowl phone 406-549-9696 www.montanasnobowl.com

MISSION MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS

The Mission Mountain Wilderness is located in the Flathead National Forest in Western Montana, and the 73,877 acre area was officially classified as Wilderness on January 4, 1975. The Salish and Kootenai peoples have traditionally used the Mission Mountains for fishing, hunting, berry gathering, and other cultural events.

The Mission Mountains are an area of outstanding scenic beauty—rugged, snow-capped peaks, several small glaciers, alpine lakes, meadows, and clear cold streams.

Elevations range from 4,500 to 9,000 feet, with the average about 7,000 feet. The highest mountain is McDonald Peak at 9,820 feet on the Flathead Tribal Wilderness side of the Mission Mountains.

Animals making their home in this rugged natural and wild area include mountain goats, grizzly and black bear, elk, mule deer, and an occasional white-tailed deer. You may also see coyote, badger, skunk, beaver, muskrat, porcupine, chipmunk, pika, squirrel, snowshoe rabbit, and yellow belly and hoary marmots. Occasionally you may see mountain lion, marten, mink, bobcat, lynx, weasel, and wolverine. The Mission Mountains support a variety of raptors, water birds, upland game birds, shore birds, owls, hummingbirds, and song birds. The area has about 50 species. Most of the fishing is confined to the lakes. There are native cutthroat trout in many of the lakes. Other non-native fish species include rainbow trout, golden trout,

hybrid trout, Dolly Varden, and mountain whitefish. The outstanding multi-colored displays of wildflowers in the alpine meadows and high basins will surprise you. The number of species has never been counted. Most people visit the wilderness between July 1 and October 1. Snow-filled passes and high streams make earlier travel difficult and hazardous. High lakes do not open up until early or mid-June.

BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS

The Bob Marshall Wilderness is often referred to as the “crown jewel” of America's wilderness areas. It is comprised of 1,009,356 acres of high mountain lakes, crystal clear rivers, remote valleys and high, alpine meadows. In the 1970s, the federal government added the Scapegoat Wilderness and the Great Bear Wilderness, creating a total wilderness complex of a million and a half acres.

The wilderness area is home to elk, moose, black bear, mountain goat, mountain sheep, mountain lion whitetail and mule deer, and provides critical habitat to the grizzly bear and gray wolf. The “Bob” is accessible only by trails making it a true outback experience for hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback and pack trips, river floating, and camping.





RESOURCES

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TRANSPORTATION

Interstate Highway 93, that is a major north-south highway extending from the Mexican to Canadian borders, transits the entire length of Lake County. It is the main route to and through Lake County for freight, logs, locals, tourists—and bicyclists!

North and south **bus service** is provided by Intermountain Transportation Company with connecting services in Kalispell and Missoula. Nearest Interstate (46 mi.) I-90

Air Service: Lake County has three airports located in Ronan, Polson and St. Ignatius with services provided according to the table listed below. Commercial air service through major carriers is available at both Glacier International Airport in Kalispell and Missoula International Airport.

Polson: 1 mile to airport, elev. 2,983', paved, length 4,195', storage, maintenance, charter.

Ronan: 2 miles to airport, elev. 3,080, paved, length 4,800', storage, maintenance, charter.

St. Ignatius: 1 mile to airport, elev. 3,000', paved length 2,610', storage, maintenance, no air service.

Kalispell: ¾ mile to airport, elev. 2,977', paved length 8,002', storage, maintenance, airlines serving Glacier Int'l Airport, Delta, Northwest, Horizon, Big Sky, air freight: FedEx.

Missoula: ½ mile to airport, elev. 3,201', paved length, 9,501', storage, maintenance, airlines serving Missoula Int'l Airport: Delta, Northwest, Horizon, Big Sky, United; Air freight: FedEx.

LAKE COUNTY SERVICES

Courthouse 106 4th Avenue E., Polson MT

Environmental Health

406-883-7236, envhealth@lakecounty-mt.org

Planning Department 406-883-7235

Treasurer Department

Motor Vehicle/License 406-883-3755; Taxes 406-883-7224

Board of Commissioners 406-883-7204

Road Department 406-883-7206

Solid Waste Department 406-883-7323; Landfill: 406-883-5412

Website: www.lakecodirect.com

COMMUNITY SERVICES

3 golf courses; 4 public tennis courts; 10 parks, 2 movie theaters, 2 theatrical playhouses, 2 newspapers, one library each in Polson, Ronan and St. Ignatius

Religious organizations: 27 Protestant, 4 Catholic, 10 Mormon, 2 Kingdom Halls of Jehovahs Witnesses

2 newspapers

Radio Stations: 1 FM, 1 AM

3 TV channels without cable, 1 cable company

Public Access TV (through Salish Kootenai College)

RECREATION

Cross-country skiing can be enjoyed in most areas in the surrounding hills and mountain areas of the Mission Valley. For groomed cross-country trails, the Blacktail Mountain X-Country Ski Trails are made possible by the cooperative efforts of the Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest and Flathead Country Parks and Recreation Department. To reach the trails turn off Hwy 93 at Blacktail Road and drive 6.4 mi. to the lower parking area, and 8.1 miles to the upper parking area. The ski trail system is rated: easiest, difficult and most difficult. There are 4 loop trails ranging in length from 5.25 miles to 8 miles. To view a detailed map go to www.blacktailmountain.com/cross_country.

Snowmobiling in the Mission Mountains is a true winter outback experience. Maybe more than any other mountain range in Montana, these jagged peaks beckon sledders to come closer and explore. Because the trails are on the Flathead Indian Reservation, snowmobilers need special recreation permits widely available at gas stations and convenience stores on the reservation. The Boulder Trail starts Off Hwy 35 near Finley Point on Flathead Lake. The first 10 miles are groomed with another 60 miles of ungroomed trails through the forest openings. The ungroomed Jocko Lake Trail provides a 35-mile ride over the Missions that connect with groomed trails on the Seeley Lake side.

RESOURCES

Sources for portions of the community profile in this publication, including economy, housing, tax information, education and recreation, were used with permission of:

Lake County Community Development Corp.

PO Box 128,407 Main St. S.W., Ronan, MT 59864;

Phone: 406-676-5901; www.lakecountycdc.org

Department of Labor and Industry

Lake County Job Service Workforce Center

417-B Main, PO Box 970 Polson, MT 59860

406-883-7880; fax 406-883-4564

www.jsd.dli.mt.gov/local/polson

Polson City Hall:

106 First St., Polson, MT 59860

406-883-8200

Polson Community Development Assoc.

PO Box 758, Polson, MT 59860

406-883-8076

Polson Redevelopment Agency:

PO Box 1354, Polson, MT 59860

Contact: Lake County Job Service Workforce Center;

406-883-7885




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WELCOME TO SANDERS COUNTY

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CLIMATE & TOPOGRAPHY

The climate in Sanders County is similar to that of the northeast Washington area with relatively mild temperatures year round, but also having four distinct seasons.

During the winter months, daytime temperatures hover around 32°, dipping roughly 10-15 degrees cooler at night. In the protection of the mountain ranges, the valleys within the county receive less severe temperatures and wind than the plains areas east of the Continental Divide. Snowfall usually doesn't exceed ten inches on the ground at any one time. Heavier snowfalls, however, can be expected at higher elevations making for great snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

The Valley narrows in the northwest section of the county and becomes more densely wooded. It receives almost twice as much precipitation (in excess of 36 inches) as the eastern section (less than 10 inches) which has wider valleys and a semi-arid terrain. During summer months, 90° temperatures are common with the average being around 85°, cooling off nicely at night to the mid-forties. The growing season ranges between 115 to 130 days.

Community	Mean Maximum/Minimum Temps		Avg. Precip. In/Year
	January	July	
Dixon	32/17	85/49	16.18
Heron	31/18	82/46	34.21
Hot Springs	35/20	86-29	15.75
Lonepine	34/19	86/48	11.83
Noxon	30/20	85/48	29.99
Paradise	33/18	83/47	14.01
Plains	32/18	84/47	14.50
Thompson Falls	33/19	87/49	22.77

CITIES & TOWNS IN SANDERS COUNTY

Belknap	Noxon
Camas	Paradise
Dixon	Perma
Heron	Plains
Hot Springs	Thompson Falls
Lonepine	Trout Creek

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY

Major industries are timber and wood products (including log homes), agriculture, mineral and service businesses. Businesses range from high-tech computer driven machining to horse logging. The Sanders County EDC maintains a listing of current programs and provides assistance and information on a local level.

GOVERNMENT

Three county commissioners meet at the county seat in Thompson Falls. The three incorporated towns of Hot Springs, Plains, and Thompson Falls have a mayor/council government. County Courthouse: 406-827-6942. Government offices include three US Forest



The elementary school in Paradise

Service ranger district offices, an Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office, an ACS office, two conservation district offices, and a district office of the Montana Department of State Lands.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 25 YEARS & OLDER

	Sanders County	Montana
Less than a High School Diploma	14.8%	8.3%
High School Diploma (or equivalent)	43.1%	29.9%
Some College	20.6%	25.1%
Associate's Degree	6.2%	7.9%
Bachelor's Degree	12.4%	19.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	2.8%	9.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010

POPULATION

AREA CENSUS	2006 EST.	2015	2018
Montana	926,920	1,032,949	1,062,330
Sanders County	10,898	11,336	11,395
Hot Springs	557	547	551
Plains	1,225	1,051	1,068
Thompson Falls	1,423	1,332	1,368

Source: WorldPopulationReview.com

MONEY

Average Household Income: \$42,132

Median Household Income: \$34,336

Median Home Sale Price: \$183,100

Sales Tax Rate: 0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY

20 churches, organizations including 4-H and youth groups, Grange, Shriners, Lions, Elks, women's clubs, sportsmen's clubs, historical societies, senior citizens centers and Sanders County Council on Aging, Inc. Chambers of Commerce in Hot Springs, Plains-Paradise, and Thompson Falls.

SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools, Kindergarten thru 12th Grade:
Camas Prairie Elementary, 781 County Rd. 382, Plains, MT 59829,
406-741-2837

Dixon Elementary, P.O. Box 10, Dixon, MT 59831, 406-246-3566
Hot Springs Public Schools, P.O. Box 1005, Hot Springs, MT 59845,
406-741-3285

Noxon Public Schools, P.O. Box 1506, Noxon, MT 59853,
406-847-2442

Paradise Elementary, 20, Schoolhouse Hill Road, Box 126,
Paradise, MT 59856, 406-826-3344

Plains Public Schools, Box 549, Plains, MT 59859, 406-826-3866

Thompson Falls Public Schools, P.O. Box 129,
Thompson Falls, MT 59873, 406-827-3323

Trout Creek Elementary, 85 Pine Street,
Trout Creek, MT 59874, 406-827-3629

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Laurie Hill Library, Box 128, Heron, MT 59844-9521,
406-847-2520

Preston Hot Springs Town-County Library, 203 E. Main St.,
Hot Springs, MT 59845-0127, 406-741-3491

Plains District Library, 108 W. Railroad, Plains, MT 59859-0339,
406-826-3101

Thompson Falls Public Library, 911 Main St., Thompson Falls,
MT 59873-0337, 406-827-3547

UTILITIES

NorthWestern Energy serves the Thompson Falls, Plains, and Paradise communities, with only slightly over half its available capacity. Thompson Falls Dam is a hydroelectric facility operated by NorthWestern Energy. The Hot Springs/Lonepine area is served by Mission Valley Power with additional capacity available. Trout Creek, Noxon, and Heron are served by Northern Lights, Inc., a rural electric cooperative. More capacity is available from Washington Water Power, which operates the Noxon Rapids and Cabinet Gorge Dams. Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative serves Sanders County's telecommunications needs. Local service is provided in Hot Springs by the Hot Springs Telephone Co.



U.S. Highway 200 crossing the Clark Fork River

TRANSPORTATION

Plains Airport: elevation 2,462 feet, 3,050-foot gravel runway. Thompson Falls Airport: elevation 2,460 feet, 4,200-foot paved runway (courtesy car is available). Hot Springs Airport: elevation 2,763 feet, 2,500-foot gravel runway. Montana Rail Link serves the Clark Fork River Valley.

Freight service by common carrier and independent truckers, as well as US Postal Service, Federal Express, and United Parcel Service. Seven different highways serve Sanders County.

TOP 10 PRIVATE EMPLOYERS

Avista Corporation
Clark Fork Valley Hospital
Evergreen Hot Springs Health & Rehabilitation Center
First Security Bank
Little Bitterroot Services
Monarch School
Quinn's Hot Springs Resort
Sander's County Harvest Foods
Thompson River Lumber
Town Pump

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HOSPITAL SERVICES

Clark Fork Valley Hospital and Family Medicine Network, a not for profit community healthcare organization, was opened in 1971—the result of a community driven effort to build a modern hospital in a central location to serve the residents of Sanders County and its surrounding communities. Nestled in the town of Plains, Montana, CFVH is a 16-bed critical access facility that additionally manages a Long Term Care facility with 28 resident beds. Our Emergency Department providers have years of experience treating minor injuries and providing life-saving care for patients of all ages. We are trauma designated and offer emergency care services 24/7.

In an effort to extend our quality of care, our Family Medicine Network operates three Family Medicine offices located in the towns of Thompson Falls, Plains and Hot Springs. These offices offer extensive primary care and rehabilitation services as well as basic imaging and laboratory services on-site. Additional specialty services are offered by our network of specialty care providers to keep your medical care closer to home, family and friends. Specialty services include audiology, cardiology, neurology, ophthalmology and orthopedics.

At our main hospital campus in Plains, we perform a wide range of procedures in our state-of-the-art facility, many of which can be performed on an outpatient basis, allowing the patient to return to the comfort of his or her own home the same day.

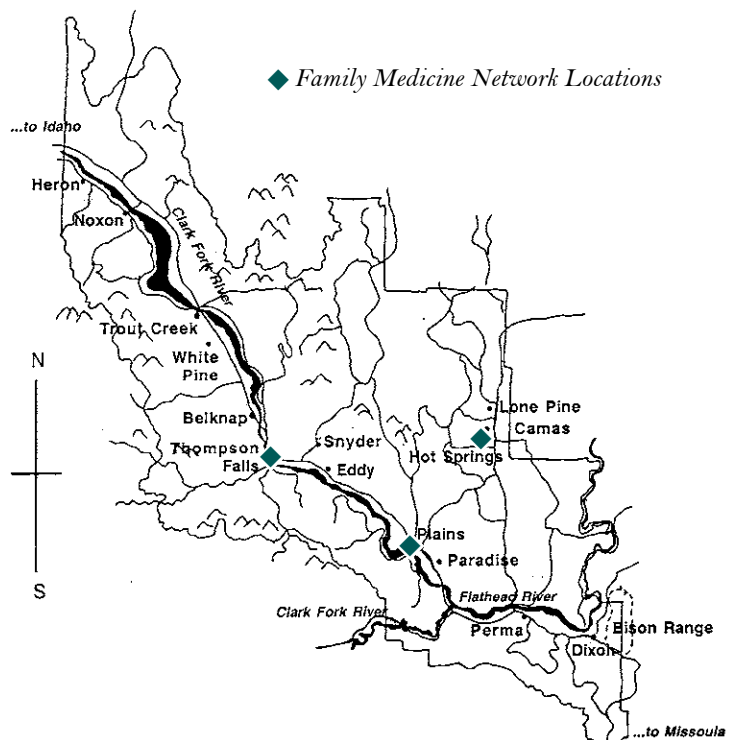
CFVH offers a full range of diagnostic imaging services including x-ray, ultrasound and CT scanning. Other services include a federally certified mammography service, bone density scans and a mobile MRI service. (See complete list of services in our ad on page 23.)

CFVH takes great pride in our Birthing Center, which offers serene labor and delivery suites complete with jacuzzi tubs and many comforting and homelike amenities. The arrival of every baby is truly a special event here at CFVH. Each of our obstetrical service providers are highly skilled and can additionally perform c-sections if the need arises. Childbirth education and safety courses are also provided to expecting families free of charge.

Long Term Care residents enjoy the comforts of home in a warm, welcoming environment with the supportive resources of a full-service hospital in an attached facility. Our multidisciplinary care team emphasizes the physical, mental and spiritual well being of our residents and the highest level of independence in daily living and activities.

For those in need of home health and hospice services, our nationally recognized agency works with families across the county to help patients regain their independence or navigate illnesses or difficult times in their life.

At CFVH, we are proud to offer our patients, residents and visitors a different kind of experience when they enter our doors, access our services and rely on us for care. We are caring for our friends, family and our neighbors which motivates us to make our delivery of care that much more personal. Without question, the cornerstone of all of our achievements is our workforce. Employees take seriously our responsibility to the many patients who put their well-being, and often their lives, in our hands. We are constantly striving to improve. We continue to develop new skills, acquire new knowledge and bring in new technology so we can deliver the quality of care our patients expect and deserve.





Clark Fork Valley Hospital & Family Medicine Network

10 Kruger Road . Plains, MT 59859 . (406) 826-4800 . www.cfvh.org

FAMILY MEDICINE NETWORK OFFICE LOCATIONS

THOMPSON FALLS . PLAINS . HOT SPRINGS

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Cardiology

Cardiopulmonary Services

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- ◆ Cardiac Stress Testing
- ◆ Echocardiography
- ◆ Lung Function Studies
- ◆ Sleep Studies

Care Coordination

CPAP/Home Oxygen

Dermatology

- ◆ Skin Checks
- ◆ Lesion Removals

Diabetes Education

Emergency Services

Endocrinology

Full Service Medical Laboratory

Home Health & Hospice Care

Imaging Services

- ◆ CT/MRI Scanning
- ◆ Digital Imaging (X-Ray)
- ◆ Digital Mammography
- ◆ DXA (Bone Density)
- ◆ Ultrasound

Long Term Care

Mental and Behavioral Health Services

Neurology

Nutrition Counseling

Obstetrical Care

Orthopedics

Prenatal Classes

Primary Care

- ◆ Diabetes Management
- ◆ Immunizations
- ◆ Internal Medicine
- ◆ Medicare/Wellness Visits
- ◆ Physical Exams
- ◆ Pre/Post Operative Exams
- ◆ Preventive Health

Primary Care (continued)

- ◆ Screenings
- ◆ Treatment of Illness
- ◆ Women's Health

Pulmonology

Psychiatry

Rehabilitation Services

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- ◆ Occupational Therapy
- ◆ Physical Therapy
- ◆ Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- ◆ Speech Therapy

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Clark Fork Valley Hospital





SANDERS COUNTY COMMUNITIES

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PLAINS

Nestled in the fertile Clark Fork Valley at an elevation of just over 2,000 feet, Plains is a quaint farming and ranching community with a population of about 1,200. It offers most of the features of a larger city with most services available and a wide variety of stores from tanning salons to livestock supplies.

Plains residents are generally community minded, which is reflected in their activities and special events. Good old-fashioned fun such as parades, races, street dancing and contests take place on "Plains Day." Plains also has its very own "swim team" with an Olympic sized swimming pool. **The Sanders County Fair** is held Labor Day weekend in Plains, with activities including a PRCA Rodeo, a carnival, 4-H and community exhibits and livestock, Sanders County Queen Pageant and Demolition Derby.

Climate & Topography

The Plains Valley is totally surrounded by mountain ranges rising

up to one mile above the valley floor. Baldy Mountain is the highest peak in the area at 7,464 feet and can be seen by looking just north of Plains.

The climate is classified as "modified Pacific Maritime." Average annual precipitation in Plains is estimated between 14 to 16 inches and up to 30 inches at the higher elevations. Average high year-round temperature is 62 degrees with an average low of about 35 degrees. Summer temperatures are usually in the 80's and 90's with "cool" nights in the 55 to 60 degree range. The average growing season varies from 115 to 125 days.

Community Services & Facilities

The Plains Public Library boasts over 13,000 books, a tape library and many reference services.

The Plains-Paradise Senior Citizens have an active organization with Meals on Wheels, a program the center provides for those in need. 406-826-3018

The Plains City Park has a swimming pool and adjacent wading pool, three tennis courts, an eight lane bowling alley with leagues in the winter, and a comfortable movie theater.

Plains Airport: The new plains Airport (named Penn Stohr Field) was dedicated and opened on October 7, 2006, after eight years of planning with the last two in construction. The new airport runway being 4,650 feet in length will allow for much larger aircraft including medium-sized business jets to land at Plains. Clark Fork Valley Hospital will be able to utilize the new facility for use by fixed-wing aircraft able to transport patients anywhere in the western United States. The U.S. Forest Service and Department of State Lands will be adding a Single Engine Air Track fire bombers base at the airport, for use in the summertime fire season to support the fire retardant bombing aircraft. The airport has one of the longest runways in Western Montana.


Health Services

The Clark Fork Valley Hospital and its attached nursing home and clinic are in Plains (see page 5). The Rittenour Medical Clinic offers lab and x-ray services, along with outpatient family practice care. Other health services available in Plains include an assisted living facility, dentistry, optometry, chiropractic care, and an independent physical therapy clinic. Little Bitterroot Special Services provides training and services for people with developmental disabilities.

Industry


Lumber production and agriculture are Plains' two main industries. Fir, pine, cedar and western larch (locally called tamarack) are harvested for dimension lumber, plywood, house logs and posts and poles.

Agriculture caters to both traditional and specialty markets. Farm-ranch combinations produce cattle, sheep, horses, hay and grains (wheat, oats and barley). Blue grass lawn seed is also produced. The valley has three nurseries. Two wholesale nurseries produce orna-




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mentals, fruit and shade trees, reforestation stock and seed. One of the largest timber companies in Montana has also located its reforestation nursery at Plains. Other non-traditional crops include baby's breath and other ornamentals sold dried and preserved to florists.

There are numerous cottage industries, including the manufacture of rifles and rifle barrels.

A new and growing industry in the Plains area is "landscape rock." Rock products being quarried in the Plains Valley are shipped nationwide for a variety of uses, including landscaping, building and architectural. The product comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors. The rock business currently employs over 100 people directly and indirectly and has become one of the main sources of employment for working-class jobs.

Plains is the headquarters of the Plains-Thompson Falls Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest. Other agencies with offices in Plains are the Department of State Lands, Forestry Division, the Soil Conservation Service, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and the SCS Soil Survey. Champion Timberlands maintains a district office in Plains.

Recreation

Outdoor recreation opportunities are nearly unlimited in this corner of Montana. Rafting, boating, water skiing and fishing on the Clark Fork River are popular pastimes, with several places to launch watercraft. While on the river look for Canada geese, ducks, osprey, cranes, and eagles. For the photographer the immediate area around Plains is full of photo opportunities.

Hunting for all big game native to Montana is found in the surrounding public land area.

A nine-hole golf course three miles from town, can be played for a modest greens fee. Also a short distance from town is a natural mineral hot springs with a swimming pool, hot tubs, restaurant and campground.

THOMPSON FALLS

This beautiful community situated on the banks of the Clark Fork River is located centrally in Sanders County along US Highway 200. Thick forested mountains surround Thompson Falls providing a variety of wildlife and recreation. Local residents enjoy uncrowded fishing, boating and swimming in the reservoir formed by the Thompson Falls dam, built in 1917. A unique and scenic community park on a



Thompson Falls. PHOTO COURTESY OF GLACIER COUNTRY TOURISM

lovely wooded island is the pride of the community. The parks trail system is perfect for a brisk morning walk, or a leisurely stroll with many opportunities to view wildlife. From the spectacular sights of the dam and rugged gorge below to the delicate wildflowers, this park is a photographer's dream.

Thompson Falls golf course, just north of town offers beautiful tree-lined lush fairways, surrounded by majestic scenery. Other recreational facilities include tennis courts, a swimming pool, ball diamonds, horseshoe pits and a bowling alley. Timber and agriculture have sustained Thompson Falls for some time, but the main reason people stay is the serenity and beauty of the surrounding area.

Thompson Falls offers most of the services of a large center with a good selection of businesses and unique shops. There are nine churches, and several clubs and organizations to choose from.

Thompson Falls residents enjoy the mildest climate in the State of Montana, with an average of 20 inches of precipitation per year, and an average of 115 frost-free days. It is known as part of the "Banana Belt" of Montana.

History of Thompson Falls

David Thompson, the British explorer, fur trader and cartographer was the first white man to come to this area. Associated with the Hudsons Bay Company, he built the Saleesh House, a fur trading post in 1809. The Post was located east of the present-day site of the town. David Thompson was called Koo Koo Sint (star gazer) by the Indians. There wasn't much activity in the area until the coming of the railroad in 1881. One of the crew stayed behind and built the first home within the present townsite. Soon after, in 1883, the gold rush to the Coeur d'Alene mines came and the town grew to accommodate the men going over the Murray trail to the mines. In 1885 John Russell bought 40 acres and platted the townsite. Both the town and the falls were named after David Thompson.

PARADISE

Paradise is a small settlement located approximately 7.5 miles southeast of Plains. Paradise was originally developed as a station for the Northern Pacific Railroad. It was a vital water supply stop before climbing over the Bitterroot Range into Idaho. One story of the origins of the town's name says that it was named after a roadhouse on the trail called Pair O' Dice. Residents enjoy the peace and beauty of the surrounding mountains along with water sports and fishing out their back door. Services for the community include an elementary school, a post office, a restaurant, bar, an antique shop, real estate office and a few other services. Paradise is represented by the Plains-Paradise Chamber of Commerce.



Fun days at Noxon Reservoir. PHOTO COURTESY OF GLACIER COUNTRY TOURISM

TROUT CREEK

Trout Creek was established in 1885 as a mining, logging and later as a railroad community. It is located 20 miles west of Thompson Falls. Trout Creek is on the shores of the 35-mile-long Noxon Rapids Reservoir of the Clark Fork River. Come to Trout Creek the second Saturday of almost any month and you'll find a flurry of activity. Along with the biggest celebration of huckleberries in the state and outdoor enthusiast events, we are a community that embraces motor sports, ATV and boating events.

We feature groomed snowmobile trails for your winter activities. Fish some of the most scenic water for perch, northern pike, walleye and trout. Join us April-September for our popular bass fishing tournaments. Hunt for trophy elk, deer, bear, big horn sheep and moose. During your visit you will want to hike in the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness Area and enjoy sightseeing, camping and fishing on our remote mountain lakes and rivers. Make Trout Creek one of your vacation destinations!

NOXON

The northwestern Montana town of Noxon is located along the Clark Fork River in a heavily treed, mountainous area of the Kootenai National Forest. A one-lane bridge over the river from Hwy 200 brings you to this sparsely populated town generously endowed with natural beauty and an abundance of recreational opportunities in the surrounding area. Noxon is known for its hunting, fishing, hiking and huckleberry habitat. The Cabinet Gorge Reservoir of the Clark Fork River meanders the length of the town giving residents easy access to swimming, fishing and miles of boating. Although rural, Noxon has several services available to its residents such as a medical clinic, first-class ambulance service, a high school (9-12), which serves 120 students, a middle school (7-8) 35 students, and the elementary school (K-6) 83 students.

There is also a tennis court and city park with a picnic pavilion. Housing is still very affordable in this area of Montana, being significantly below the state average. There is a variety of local shopping

and dining with major shopping areas less than 45 miles away. For a relaxed and affordable area rich in natural beauty and recreational pursuits this is an ideal place for a summer home, or a permanent relocation choice for your family.

HERON

Started as a railroad town on the Northern Pacific line, Heron has survived 125 years of booms and busts. This scenic and charming community is located in proximity to the Bitterroot and Cabinet mountains, and is also near the Cabinet Gorge Reservoir and Clark Fork River—perfect for fishing, hiking, backpacking and snowmobiling. This beautiful little town's elevation is 2,251 feet and it has a population of 282.

HOT SPRINGS

Hot Springs is located on the eastern edge of Sanders County in the foothills of the Cabinet Mountains at an elevation of 2,915 feet.

The fastest growing community in Sanders County, Hot Springs is small but self-contained, with all services for residents.

The hot mineral springs, peaceful surroundings and abundant outdoor recreation are some of the reasons that people are drawn to this area. The climate is semi-arid and is the driest part of Montana west of the Continental Divide.

Summer temperatures average 85° to 95°. Chinook winds moderate winter temperatures greatly. Winter brings some snow, but with the lack of humidity not much accumulates on the ground.

Hot Springs has a good growing season by Montana standards, and a variety of fruit is grown in this area. Annual Event: Homesteader Days, second weekend in June.

SERVICES

School District: K-12; 406-741-2962.

Government: City government consists of a mayor, city council and seven members (or more) planning board.

City Services: A police department, volunteer fire department, rural fire department, Flathead Indian Fire Dispatcher, Ambulance.

County Services: Post office, Library, Hot Springs Airport

Utilities: Water office, sewer and water mains maintenance, Cable TV, Direct TV Satellite, light and power office (Mission Valley Power), telephone office, propane delivery, propane filling stations, garbage disposal

Medical Facilities: Hot Springs Clinic is staffed by a full time physician assistant and various visiting doctors; Hot Springs Evergreen Convalescent Center is a skilled nursing/long term care facility; Hot Springs Community Ambulance Service.

Other Services: Hot mineral baths (five sites), a banking facility, one elementary school and high school (K-12), Hot Lunch and Breakfast Program and Senior Citizens Center and Tribal Nutrition Center

Recreational Facilities: Tennis courts, nearby golf courses, baseball fields

Transportation: Locally operated bus service to the surrounding towns, senior citizens bus, small aircraft landing strip a short distance from town.



RECREATION & ATTRACTIONS

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THE CLARK FORK RIVER

The largest river in Montana as measured by volume, the Clark Fork River provides miles of pleasure for Sanders County residents as it winds its way through the Clark Fork Valley.

The river was first explored at the beginning of the 18th century by the Lewis and Clark Expedition, when it was used as a means of travel on their way to the Columbia River. Originating in the mountains of the Continental Divide, the river runs east to west through Missoula then thunders through the Alberton Gorge alongside Interstate 90, providing some of the best white water rafting in the Northwest. Below the gorge, the river widens and then takes a turn at St. Regis and flows north along Hwy 35. It twists back west a few miles upstream and continues along Hwy 200, where it meanders past several small communities providing life-giving waters to ranchland and crop farms. In its path is breathtaking scenery and a variety of wildlife

such as elk, moose, deer, cougar, grizzly and black bear, mountain goat and bighorn sheep.

As many as 100 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep may be seen at one time at the small meadow known as the Koo Koo Sint Sheep Viewing Area, eight miles east of Thompson Falls. At the community of Thompson Falls is the first of three reservoirs formed by The Hydro Electric Dam Projects in Sanders County.

Built in 1917 by the Montana Power Company, the Thompson Falls Dam actually covers the original "Falls." A scenic stroll across a walking bridge to a beautiful wooded island allows one to view the spectacular dam and rugged gorge below. Carving its way through the deep dense valley northwest of Thompson Falls, the "river" again is restrained down stream from the community of Trout Creek by the Noxon Rapids Dam.

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OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Other outdoor activities in the area are rock hunting for precious and semi-precious stones. Back packing into the high alpine country which offer tremendous opportunities for the photographer to get unusual shots of wildlife in their natural surroundings, as well as view country seen only by the adventurous.

Land available for hunting is virtually unlimited. All of the land within the national forest boundaries is open to public hunting. The three national forests surrounding Sanders County provide over 4,200,000 acres of some of the best big game habitat in the north-west. It is no wonder that the foremost outdoor recreational activity in western Montana is big game hunting. White-tailed deer, mule deer, moose, elk, mountain goats, mountain sheep, bear, mountain lion, as well as wild turkey and three kinds of grouse are included in the bag limits of the annual seasons.

Rodeos are popular with Montanans whether you participate or just enjoy watching, there's an event happening from early spring to late fall somewhere in the area. General sightseeing is great anywhere in northwestern Montana, ghost towns, old mining camps, museums, dams, reservoirs, old battlefields, state and national parks.

FISHING

Sanders County abounds with high mountain streams and lakes for fishing and hiking. Discover outstanding fly fishing with catches such as brook trout, Montana whitefish, native cutthroat, brown trout and rainbow trout. The Flathead River contains such species as mountain whitefish, lake whitefish, cutthroat, and lake trout, as well as such warm water species as largemouth bass and northern pike.

The Clark Fork River contains similar types as the Flathead River, with the addition of rainbow and brown trout. The Clark Fork holds the distinction of having the world record German Brown Trout taken just three miles north of Trout Creek. The Clark Fork (which forms the Noxon Rapids Reservoir) has also become famous for its bass fishing. The National Bass Tournament was held in the community of Trout Creek in 1994.



A Sanders County hay field.



The Old Jail Museum MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM IMAGE

THE OLD JAIL MUSEUM

In 1912 Sanders County built a formidable two-story brick building in Thompson Falls on the right bank of the Clark Fork River. Until 1982 the building served as the Sanders County detention facility, the sheriff's office and the sheriff's residence. It is now a museum honoring the pioneers who explored, mapped, settled and farmed this remote corner of Montana. Displayed are household goods, tools, artifacts, images and maps depicting succeeding eras of the early development of the community. There are many photographs taken from original glass negatives that give a glimpse past of the people, places and events from the past. Mining, logging, farming and ranching are shown in stark reality, captured by photographer E.J. Frazier.

The Old Jail Museum is located one block south of Highway 200 in the town of Thompson Falls, 109 South Madison Street. Open Memorial Day to Labor Day, noon to 4pm. 406-827-4002 or 406-827-4515, schs.thompsonfalls@gmail.com.

THE SANDERS COUNTY FAIR

The Fair is held Labor Day weekend in Plains, with activities such as a PRCA Rodeo, a carnival, 4-H and community exhibits and livestock, Sanders County Queen Pageant and Demolition Derby.

The Sanders County Fair began in 1911 with a community horse race. Participants included ladies and gentlemen from the town of Plains, as well as from the reservation. Settler ladies rode side saddle while the Native American ladies rode astride! For a number of years horse racing and horsemanship were a major part of the fair.

As the years passed, rodeos, carnivals and dances were added to the options provided to visitors and the parade during fair weekend became a favorite. Currently, the fair is in the top ten in the state of Montana and attracts visitors from throughout western Montana, northern Idaho and eastern Washington. Many of our part-time residents make sure they are present during fair time. In 2006 the fair was attended by over 40,000 people. It is the only fair in western Montana that does not charge a gate fee. Parking passes are available on a daily basis (\$5). Parking for camping and RVs is also available.

www.sanderscountyfair.com



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