

Accessible Loading Platform For Boaters

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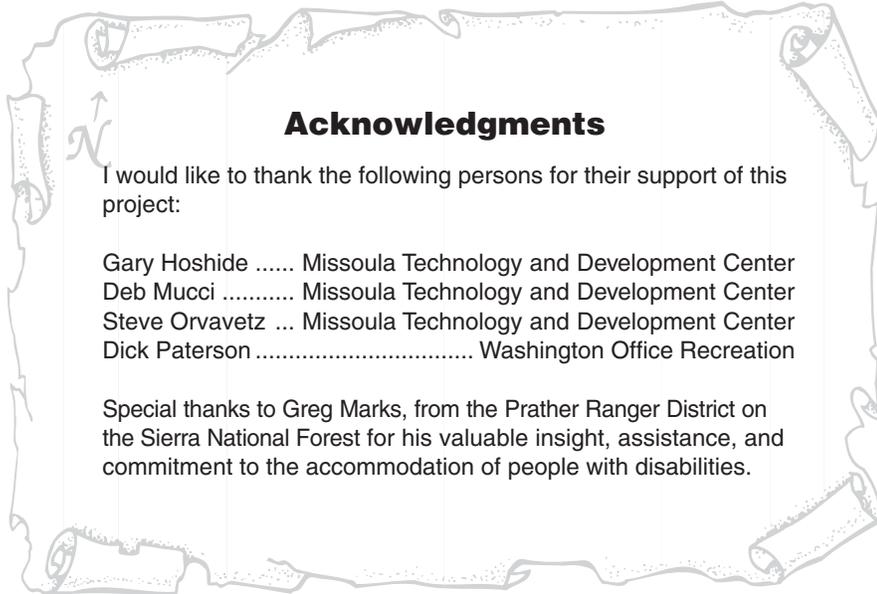
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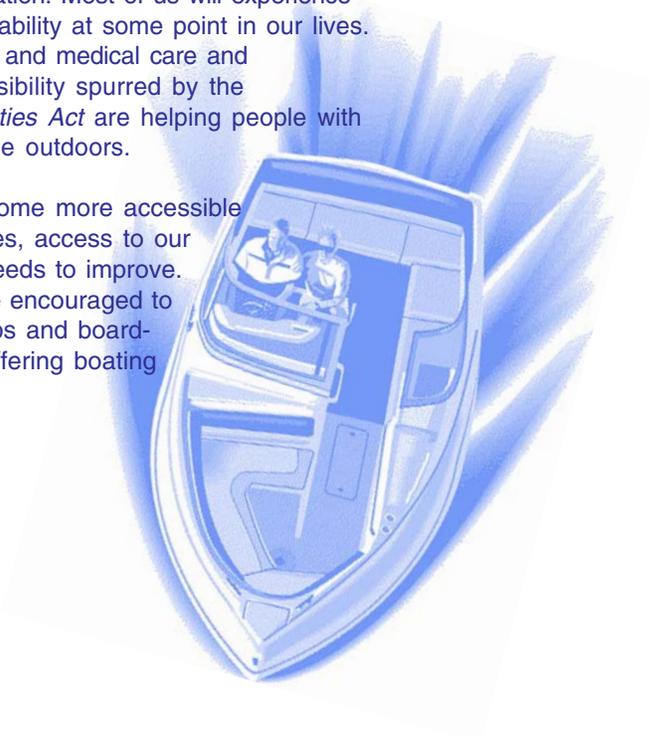
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Introduction

Outdoor recreation opportunities abound on Federal, State, and private lands. More and more people with disabilities are venturing into the great outdoors. People with disabilities represent about 15 percent of the United States population. Most of us will experience at least a temporary disability at some point in our lives. Advances in technology and medical care and improvements in accessibility spurred by the *Americans With Disabilities Act* are helping people with limited mobility enjoy the outdoors.

As recreation sites become more accessible to people with disabilities, access to our lakes and waterways needs to improve. Recreation planners are encouraged to include accessible ramps and boarding platforms at sites offering boating access.



Need for Safe Access

Safely getting into or out of a boat can pose problems for anyone. The boat may be moving and unstable.

In cases where a floating dock is being used, both the boat and dock may be moving. Entering a boat that has been pulled to shore also poses problems, especially if the shore-line is steep or rugged.

For an individual with a mobility impairment, getting into or out of a boat poses additional hazards and risks. A boarding platform on the shore can help reduce the risks (Figure 1).



Figure 1—A boarding platform on the shore can reduce the risks of getting into and out of a boat.

Project Assessment

Greg Marks, Forest Accessibility Coordinator for the Sierra National Forest, was injured in a helicopter accident in 1983. Although Greg now depends on a wheelchair for mobility, he remains an avid fisherman

and boating enthusiast (Figure 2). Greg asked the Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) to evaluate and modify several ramps to assist resource and recreation planners in making our waterways more accessible.



Figure 2—Greg Marks, Sierra National Forest, shows how he gets into a boat from his wheelchair.