



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: December 5, 2019

Agenda Item: Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan (R4)

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 minutes

Background:

The Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan sets fisheries management direction for Canyon Ferry, Hauser, and Holter reservoirs, and two associated Missouri River sections. This plan builds upon two previous management plans and addresses five key areas identified through extensive public scoping: 1) Management plan responsiveness; 2) Management plan duration; 3) Re-establishing pre-2018 rainbow trout stocking rates in the reservoirs; 4) Declining yellow perch population trends, specifically in Canyon Ferry and Holter; and 5) Walleye population size structure throughout the plan area. Alternatives for the department to consider for these five issues were developed by a 15-member citizen workgroup through three facilitated meetings last spring. This plan includes adjustments to fisheries management goals and strategies, but also includes larger conceptual changes such as an ongoing Citizen Advisory Committee to address plan responsiveness and implementation of management strategies. If adopted, the final management plan will be maintained on the FWP website with updated trends and data as it is entered in FWP databases.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

The department accepted public comment on the draft plan from Oct. 17 to Nov. 17. During the open comment period, the department also hosted open houses in Helena, Townsend, Bozeman, and Great Falls. Comments were accepted through the FWP website, email, U.S. mail, and written comments at open houses. Open houses were relatively well attended, with 10 to 20 members of the public at each meeting. The department received comments from 37 individuals through the means listed above. Comments covered a variety of topics, with most focused on walleye management in the reservoirs. The department made several changes throughout the document based on public comments. See the attached summary and response to comments for additional analysis.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The commission may: 1) Approve the final plan as presented, which incorporates public input since the draft plan was approved; 2) Modify the presented plan; 3) Not approve the plan. If the plan is not approved the department would not use defined criteria to guide fisheries management in the reservoir system.

Department Recommendation

The department recommends the commission approve the final plan as presented. The final plan includes productive feedback received during the open comment period.

Proposed Motion:

I move the commission approve the Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan as presented.