

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 13, 2019

Agenda Item: Extension of public comment and alternative administrative rule proposal pertaining to amendments to current no-wake zones and adoption of new no-wake zones on Canyon Ferry Reservoir

Division: Enforcement

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 min

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Background:

Canyon Ferry Reservoir is a large impoundment of the Missouri River in central Montana near Helena that sees a large volume of recreational boating and camping during the summer months. Commercial marinas around the lake have no-wake zones in place, and several public boat ramps do as well. The commission proposed ARM amendments last October that sought to proactively address safety by adding no-wake zones to areas of heavy usage. The department now recommends an alternative proposal, which would achieve the same goals as the original proposal and respond to concerns raised by the public. The alternative creates a 200-foot no-wake zone of the north end of Canyon Ferry Reservoir, starting at Kayley Bay on the north shoreline and ending at Crittenden on the south shoreline (see map). This provides a 200-foot no-wake buffer in front of all cabins on the lake and does not impose restrictions on the undeveloped shorelines of the lake.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

Public comment was taken from Nov. 2 through Dec. 7, 2018, including a public hearing held on Nov. 29 in Helena. FWP received 16 written comments and five oral comments at the public hearing. Most of the public comments were in favor of increased no-wake zone restrictions on the north end of the reservoir due to heavy boat traffic. Multiple commenters suggested the commission adopt similar rules to the western fishing district by establishing a no-wake zone within 200 feet of the shoreline.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The commission may choose to propose the alternative amendments for no-wake zones on Canyon Ferry Reservoir and extend public comment accordingly; the commission may choose to adopt the original proposal partially or in its entirety; finally, the commission may choose not to adopt any rule amendments.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

FWP recommends the commission propose the alternative amendments. The alternative proposal seeks to strike a balance between the recreating public and the concerns of cabin owners on the lake. The alternative proposal was developed based on public comments received during the process and the success of the 200-foot no-wake zone in the western fishing district.

Proposed Motion:

I move that the Fish and Wildlife Commission propose the alternative administrative rule amendments to the original no-wake zones proposal for Canyon Ferry Reservoir and extend public comment to consider the alternative proposal.