



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: October 17, 2019

Agenda Item: Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 Minutes

Background:

The draft 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 draft 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. Workgroup recommendations were presented at three open houses in Great Falls, Helena, and Bozeman in July. This draft 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 approved and 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:

This draft plan was prepared with public input from three open houses attended by approximately 150 people in December, an online survey in December that saw replies from 1,197 respondents, plus three facilitated meetings with the 15-member Citizen Workgroup. Open houses were held to discuss the Citizen Workgroup recommendations in July and were poorly attended. If the draft plan is approved, a 30-day comment period will commence and open houses will be held in Helena, Great Falls, Bozeman, and Townsend.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The commission may: 1) Approve the draft plan for public comment as presented; 2) Modify the draft plan and approve for public comment; 3) Not approve the draft plan for public comment.

Department Recommendation

The department recommends the commission approve the draft plan for public comment as presented.

Proposed Motion:

I move to approve the draft Upper Missouri River Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan as presented and collect public comments on the draft plan.