



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** August 13, 2020

**Agenda Item:** Future Fisheries Improvement Program Summer Funding Panel Recommendations

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

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## **Background:**

The Future Fisheries Improvement Program continues to provide funds for projects that restore fishery habitats in streams, rivers and lakes for the benefit of wild fisheries. Applications are reviewed twice each year by the 14-member Citizen Review Panel appointed by the Governor. Recommendations are forwarded to the Fish & Wildlife Commission every six months for consideration and approval. For the Summer 2020 funding cycle, the Citizen Review Panel recommends funding 9 of 9 submitted proposals at a program cost of \$228,793.62. Matching funds or in-kind contributions from outside sources total \$719,866.40 for a more than 3-to-1 match. The program is expected to have approximately \$36,000 available for the winter funding cycle, which is the final cycle of this biennium.

## **Public Involvement Process & Results:**

The public is informed about program funding opportunities via news releases, a public meeting, and information posted on FWP's website. The Citizen Review Panel conducted a public meeting on June 11 and reviewed applications, discussed proposed projects with applicants in attendance, and provided the opportunity for public comment. No public comment was received at the meeting, except from applicants in attendance. All applications received for the funding cycle were posted on FWP's website, which allowed viewers to submit comments online. No online comments were received. Environmental Assessments were prepared for one of the nine projects recommended for funding. Of the remaining eight, five have been or will be assessed under the federal National Environmental Policy Act, two will have an EA completed by the applicant, and one has been completed. The comment period for the drafted EA will end July 30th, and two comments (informational & supportive) have been received. An update can be provided at the commission meeting.

## **Alternatives and Analysis:**

- A. The commission could approve funding recommendations for active projects submitted by the Citizen Review Panel and prioritized by the ranking committee. This alternative would provide funds to assist in the completion of projects that will improve habitat for wild fish populations.
- B. The commission could disapprove or modify the recommendations of the Citizen Review Panel. Under this alternative, applicants would need to seek other sources of funding or suspend projects that otherwise would have benefited wild fish populations.

## **Proposed Motion:**

I move the commission approve the Citizen Review Panel funding recommendations for the Summer 2020 funding cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.