



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: April 1, 2021

Agenda Item: White Bear FAS Closure (R3)

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background: White Bear FAS is located on the south edge of Great Falls on the Missouri River. The site has been seasonally closed since 2015 because of a high volume of unsavory activities from June to September, such as under-age use of alcohol, illegal drug use, violent behavior, public disturbance, vandalism and litter. This activity caused numerous disturbances with neighbors and other site users and required a high law enforcement presence and high demand on maintenance resources. Neighbors expressed concerns about their safety and security because of the unlawful activities at the FAS. The commission closed the site from June to September in 2015, 2016 (July to September), 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 to eliminate this type of behavior while a long-term solution was being explored (such as property exchange, presence of seasonal staff, management changes, and site modifications). Seasonal site closures have greatly reduced unlawful activity at the site. When the closure was not in place in May-June 2016 the previous problems quickly returned, and the problems ceased after adopting a closure in July 2016. Presently the department is continuing to identify options for this site.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Neighbors to the site approached the commission in September 2014 during the open-microphone session and raised concerns about their safety. The public commented during the 2015, 2016 and 2017 seasonal-closure processes. Previous public comment generally supported closing the site; however, there were a small portion of commenters who supported keeping the site open. White Bear FAS has been seasonally closed multiple years and since the season closures, there have been fewer comments received.

Alternatives and Analysis: The commission could institute a seasonal closure or leave the site open. Leaving the site open substantially impacts FWP and county law enforcement resources as well as FAS maintenance resources. Instituting a seasonal closure has proven to inhibit unlawful activities at the site.

Proposed Motion: I move that the commission implement a seasonal closure of the White Bear FAS from June 1, 2021 through September 6, 2021 and from June 1, 2022 through September 5, 2022.