



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Public Comment Summary

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Item: Petition to prohibit motorized boating on Tepee lake

Public comment Period: 12/11/20 to 1/8/21

Public Comment Hearing: 1/5/2021

Background:

On November 18th, 2020 the commission voted to initiate rule making on a petition to restrict motorized boating on Tepee lake in the North Fork of the Flathead River, Flathead County Montana. The Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks conducted a public comment period for 28 days between 12/11/20 and 7/8/21. The Department also conducted a public comment hearing via Zoom on 1/5/21.

Public Involvement Process & Results

During the Public comment period the commission received 27 written comments in favor of the proposal.

On 1/5/2021 during the public comment hearing the commission received 8 public comments in favor of the proposal.

On 2/12/21 the commission received a letter from a concerned landowner owning property on the lake requesting the decision be postponed.

The commission did not receive any comments opposing the proposal.

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From: [Brace & Kathleen Hayden](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] limiting Tepee Lake to manually operated watercraft
Date: Thursday, January 7, 2021 2:53:36 PM

Phil Kilbreath
Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Enforcement Division
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Mr Kilbreath:

I strongly support the proposed rule that would limit watercraft on Tepee Lake to those that are manually powered. I lived in Northwestern Montana for 29 years and my family often hiked, picked huckleberries, and skied in the North Fork of Flathead area. Few places are as breathtakingly beautiful and wild. Mans impact remains minimal.

I know Tepee Lake. It is a tiny, peaceful gem in the North Fork where moose feed and loons give calls that remain forever in your mind. The lake is very small, and shallow. Power boats and jet skiis are not appropriate here. While motorized conflicts do not presently exist on Tepee Lake, there is no assurance that this will remain so. Thus we encourage the FWP commissioners to adopt a rule that restricts watercraft on Tepee lake to those that are non motorized. In doing so The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission will be taking a major step towards preserving the lake's quiet beauty for current and future generations to enjoy.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Brace Hayden
902 Josephine Drive
Bozeman, MT 59715-7437

From: [Kim Pearce](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Motorized Access on Tepee Lake
Date: Saturday, January 9, 2021 11:06:57 AM

Hi Phil,

I am writing to express my concern and voice my support for disallowing the use of motorized watercraft on Tepee Lake in the North Fork Valley. I strongly support disallowing the use of any motorized watercraft on this small, pristine mountain lake. The lake is only 44 acres. While, technically under current law, personal watercraft can be used on any lake over 40 acres, that doesn't necessarily mean that the lake should have personal watercraft allowed on it. Jet skis can reach speeds up to 60 miles per hour. This is extremely dangerous on a small, narrow lake. The risk of injury from reckless riding on these watercrafts is a serious threat. The remote area of this lake is not the place for this risky conduct. I have personally been first on scene to accidents in the North Fork, it isn't a position that you want to find yourself in. Help is not easy, you need to know where to go and who has access to the internet or a satellite phone to call in for help. The common person coming up to Tepee Lake to enjoy an afternoon playing on their watercraft mostly likely does not have access to these resources. This further accentuates the risks and danger that they would be taking by using dangerous watercraft in a remote area.

Additionally, I support the disallowance of motorized watercraft on the lake to protect the established loon population on the lake. Loons nest on the shores of lake water. Motorized water apparatuses the lake creates waves that will disrupt the nesting and therefore the overall loon population on the lake. There was a study conducted by Montana State University on the effects of human recreation on lakes and the existing loon populations in the Tabacco-Stillwater and Clearwater Swan drainages in Northwestern Montana. The study found that "A significant negative relationship was shown between the number of chicks produced per total nest attempt and the surface area disturbance ratio. A positive relationship was indicated between the number of fledged juveniles per nest attempt after protective signs were used and Skaar's disturbance rating. Human related disturbance, which included boats and shoreline activities accounted for 59% of the observed flushes and kept loons off their nests an average of 24 minutes per flush....These data demonstrate that recreational activity on nesting territories was having a significant negative effect upon loon productivity which can be mitigated with the use of floating signs surrounding nest sites." Human disturbance was the cause of reduced nesting due to increased flushing on the loons. This negatively affected their reproduction in their natural nesting environment. Tepee Lake is long and narrow, wave disturbance as a result of personal watercraft being allowed on the lake is eminent.

Finally, I support the disallowance of motorized watercraft on the lake as it would increase the wear and tear on the North Fork road. The road has already sustained an intolerable amount of traffic. The results, as we saw the last few summers, have been detrimental to the road surface. Increased potholes and erosion have made the road nearly impassible at times. Additional trailering of watercraft to the lake will worsen the conditions on the road and increase the costs of maintenance for the county.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns for this beautiful lake in the remote wilderness of the North Fork Valley. The North Fork is one of the wildest corridors left in the lower 48. Let's work together to keep it this way.

Sincerely,

Kim Pearce, North Fork Landowner

Kimberly A. Pearce, CPA, MST

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." ~ Winston Churchill

From: [Dale Horton](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teepee Lake - Motor Rules
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 7:00:26 PM

Mr. Kilbreath: I will not be able to attend the telephonic meeting regarding the use of motors on Teepee Lake in the North Fork of the Flathead. We have owned property in the North Fork for almost 20 years. Teepee Lake is too small a body of water to allow the use of motors. The lake is easily accessible with kayaks, canoes, and row boats. Motorized watercraft will disturb other users of the lake. I strongly oppose the use of motorized watercraft of any kind on the lake, it is just too small for those activities. Our address in the North Fork is at 11531 North Fork Road. Thank you. Dale Horton

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Dale Horton
3713 Creekwood Road
Missoula, Montana 59802
406-239-4196
horton@montana.com

From: [Linda Henderson](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teepee Lake boating rules
Date: Tuesday, December 29, 2020 5:04:27 PM

Dear Mr. Kilbreath,

I am writing in support of limiting boating on Teepee Lake to manually operated only watercraft. Motorized watercraft are totally inappropriate on this lake, harming not only the physical habitat of the lake itself but also contributing significant disturbance to the wildlife and people who use this area. Please support watercraft use on Teepee Lake to manually operated only!

Thank you,
Linda L. Henderson
426 King St
Missoula, MT 59801
406-721-6882

From: [David Cole](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teepee Lake Hearing
Date: Tuesday, December 22, 2020 1:05:37 PM

With this email I want to voice my support for limiting boating on Teepee Lake to craft that are manually operated.

Thank you
David Cole
426 King St
Missoula MT 59801

Sent from [Mail \[go.microsoft.com\]](mailto:go.microsoft.com) for Windows 10

From: [Jack and Rachel Potter](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teepee Lake Petition
Date: Sunday, January 3, 2021 5:02:15 PM

I wish to add my support for the petition to ban motors on Teepee Lake. This small, shallow lake in the North Fork Valley of the Flathead River is particularly well-suited for non-motorized recreation. In addition, banning motors would help assure protection for nesting loons and other waterfowl. One evening Audubon point bird survey counted 40 species on the lakeshore. It is also a frequently used stop for a great diversity of migrating waterfowl. Repeated attempts to stock the lake with fish have been unsuccessful, probably due to lack of dissolved oxygen - there is no inlet.

I have been visiting Teepee Lake for over 30 years and have personally observed avian and terrestrial wildlife and seen and talked with other recreationists enjoying this quiet, secluded gem. While there seems to be no motorized use at present, this could change in the future as the recreational use and the number of residences, both seasonal and permanent continues to grow.

Thank you,

Jack Potter
Columbia Falls

From: [Flannery Coats](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teepee Lake Petition
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 3:22:10 PM

Phil,

I'm writing to you today to voice my concerns about the future of healthy watersheds in Montana. One step closer to a solution is to keep motorized boats off on Teepee Lake in NW Montana. I support the petition to keep Teepee Lake free of motorized boats forever.

Thank you and happy new year!

Flannery

From: [stan cook](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teepee Lake
Date: Sunday, December 20, 2020 2:03:44 PM

Dear Sir,

Introducing myself as a retired reforestation forester for the Gallatin (now Custer/Gallatin NF) and huge fan of Glacier National Park, I would like to comment on the proposal for Teepee Lake.

I am familiar with the area as it is that side of the park that I visit most. It seems that there is increasing encroachment on the wilder aspects of our parks, forests and less populated areas by motorized traffic of many types. The current controversies as to how to govern these areas will certainly increase. One aspect of the opposite approach is by finding areas that could be described and named as "dark skies" areas. While not the issue here, it is part of an overall effort to protect special areas.

It's my opinion that the size and shallowness of this particular water might be best suited for recreation by a restriction on motorized travel. I would appreciate your favorable consideration of the request to designate the lake as non-motorized.

Sincerely,

Stan Cook

From: [Kevin OBryan](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tepee Lake Comments
Date: Friday, January 8, 2021 9:29:52 AM

Mr. Kilbreath,

I am emailing in regard to the proposed ban on motorized boating on Tepee Lake up in the North Fork. In short, my wife Emily and I support the ban. We live a few miles from Tepee Lake and it is a beautiful area (even after the 2003 Wedge Canyon fire) that is loaded with wildlife. We are concerned that allowing motorized use on Tepee Lake would be disruptive to wildlife and ruin the quality of life for residents living near the area. We urge the commission to support the ban on motorized use.

Thank you,
Regards,
Kevin OBryan, Emily Murphree,
13875 Northfork Road
Polebridge

From: [betsy wood](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tepee Lake Petition
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 7:32:51 PM

Dear Mr. Kilbreath and the Commission:
Please keep this special place quiet and peaceful. There are hundreds of lakes in Montana where people can run their motors. They shouldn't on this one.

Thank you,
Betsy Wood

From: [Suzanne Hildner](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Cc: [Richard Hildner](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tepee Lake Petition
Date: Sunday, January 3, 2021 6:49:29 PM

Dear Mr. Kilbreath;

I am writing in support of the petition to amend ARM12.11.501 and adopt New Rule 1 to limit Tepee Lake in the North Fork of the Flathead River Valley to manually powered watercraft only. As you are aware, this petition is being presented proactively as the recreational use on the North Fork escalates rapidly. The North Fork in general and Tepee Lake in particular offer remote public recreation that is unique in its relative accessibility, wildness and beauty. As a part-time resident year around on the North Fork for over 25 years, I have witnessed the significant recent increases in recreational pressure. Tepee Lake is important loon habitat and offers no fishing opportunity but is easily accessible and as such is in danger of permanent habitat destruction from increased use. The Fish Wildlife and Parks Commission has a unique opportunity to proactively preserve this treasured part of the North Fork. Please support the petition requesting this protection.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Daniell Hildner, M.D.
104 5th Street
Whitefish, MT 59937

350 Moose Creek Rd
Polebridge, MT 59928

406-253-3263

From: [Jack and Rachel Potter](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tepee Lake Petition
Date: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 11:58:49 AM

Dear Mr. Kilbreath and Members of the Commission:

I am writing in strong support of our Petition to limit Tepee Lake to non-motorized boats only. I am one of the petitioners, but wanted to put in one more word. I am not going to repeat the apt justifications and passionate declarations already submitted, other than pointing out once again that there is no history or memory of motors on Tepee Lake.

I DO want to be sure the new Commission members watch our November 18 presentation to the Commission and read all the letters submitted at the time of the Petition, including the community letter signed by 36 individuals plus the dozen or so from individuals and a couple groups.

I also want to make you aware of an administrative matter- the link we were provided with instructions on how to comment or call in today, as well as how to submit online comments was broken at some point after it was sent to us. I was told it was disrupted during the revamp of the whole FWP website. It has not been corrected. I certainly hope that the comments submitted before the break were somehow preserved. Yes, there are alternate ways to find the information, but I know of some that gave up before I was able to notify them of the problem.

Thank you for your consideration and we hope you will see fit to make this rule.

Sincerely,

Rachel Potter

From: [Randy Kenyon](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tepee Lake
Date: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 9:39:23 AM

As a long time landowner and full time resident of the North Fork, and one who appreciates what we have before it's gone, I would ask the board to carefully consider eliminating motorized boats on Tepee Lake. This is not an infringement on usage as there has been none prior, but things are changing fast. Thank you

Randy Kenyon
Donna Harrison
77 Moose Creek Road
Polebridge, MT 59928
406-640-3184

From: [Merry O'Hare](#)
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tepee Lake: motors on the lake?
Date: Monday, January 4, 2021 10:11:34 AM

I have had a home on Trail Creek, just five miles from Tepee Creek Lake since 1971.

Tepee Lake is a nesting place for loons in the area, along with ducks, geese and other waterfowl.

Grizzlies, wolves, lynx, mountain lions, black bears, coyotes, and a multitude of other animals live in the area.

Tepee Lake is a rare habitat and any motors on this lake would destroy it.

Thank you
Merry R. O'HARE

From: kborge@g.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Teepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Saturday, December 19, 2020 10:15:28 AM

RE: Teepee Lake Petition to ban motorized boats of 9-25-2020

My father, Olaf Borge, purchased 5 acres on Teepee Lake the year I was born, in 1952. We spent our family vacations building a cabin on its shores, with hand tools alone. It has been our wilderness sanctuary ever since, and survived the Wedge Canyon fire of 2003. As part owner of this property (14920 Teepee Lake Camp), I signed the above petition to keep Teepee Lake natural and peaceful, for humans, birds, and other large animals such as moose and bears. The Loons especially have been a source of peaceful observation and fascination. Motor boats do not belong on Teepee Lake. It is too small and about all you could do is go in big circles. It is too shallow, and a motor boat will only stir up the silt and vegetation. Lastly, such a ruckus would destroy the wilderness quality of this lake, and chase the Loons from their historic breeding area.

Manually powered boats, however, are appropriate for Teepee Lake, and we have paddled around the lake for decades, as have many of our neighbors and the public.

Thanks to the many neighbors and friends who have helped keep Teepee Lake a peaceful place. I hope the Commission will also help preserve this beautiful place for all by banning motorized boats from Teepee Lake.

Thank you,
Kurt Borge
Manhattan, MT
406-282-7325
12-19-2020

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Teepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: ursulamattson@gmail.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 11:21:16 AM

I strongly support the rule to limit Tepee Lake to manually operated watercraft because of the small size of the lake, no fishing opportunities, the peace and quiet of the surrounding forests, nesting loons, and it's remoteness. Let's keep it quiet for this and future generations. Thank you. Ursula Mattson

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: burgie-sub@hughes.net
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 4:33:20 AM

I strongly support limiting the type of boat use on Tepee Lake. I reside most days during the 6 warmest months of the year a few miles north of Tepee Lake (as the crow flies) and am totally aware of the increase in human activity and the decrease in peace, quiet and serenity throughout the North Fork River drainage. Preserving and protecting the natural setting of the lakes in the North Fork drainage should be a no-brainer.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: thebestkaminski@gmail.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 7:31:56 PM

My name is Marguerite Kaminski. I am a land and cabin owner on the South end of Tepee Lake. I totally support the petition. My family, visitors, and I have observed the tranquility and grandeur of this small lake during all four seasons. It is easily navigable by nonmotorized watercraft, such as kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, etc which are quiet. They do not stir up the silt or make noise which carries very easily across this very small lake. The presence of loons and their offspring make it mandatory we preserve their habitat as undisturbed as possible, as well as visiting trumpeter swans and other species of birds' habitat. Diverse wildlife swim across and visit the shore line of Tepee often. This lake is just too small and too important a habitat for loons, wildlife, etc, for motorized watercraft. I have been a boat inspector for four years at Whitefish Lake, five months each year, and I know there are many lakes in Northwest Montana much larger than Tepee that are appropriate for motorized watercraft. Thank you for your consideration of this petition.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: crmneil@mac.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Teepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 2:33:28 PM

I am a longtime land owner in the North Fork area and believe that every care must be taken to keep the rate of change there to the slowest pace possible--for the Park, for the Wildlife, for the special environment of the North Fork area itself.
Please limit boats on Teepee to hand power. (Fewer motors means less pollution, too.)

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Teepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: kenyonnorthfork@gmail.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Teepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 1:45:16 PM

Please carefully consider precluding motorized activity on Teepee Lake. I have been a landowner and resident of the North Fork for many years and consider Teepee Lake a treasure to be preserved. In addition, the loon activity on and around this lake is a wonder to behold.
Thank you

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Teepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: bracehayden@gmail.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 1:44:20 PM

Dear FWP Commissioners

I wanted to write in strong support of keeping wild and scenic lakes non-motorized in perpetuity. TeePee lake is a shining example of a quite refuge on the border of GNP and upper N. Fork basin that is home to many species of wildlife I'd like to see & hear and have my grandchildren experience. Thank you for holding steady with the proposed adoption of manual watercraft only in TeePee lake, and thank you for doing what you do to keep Montana's fish, wildlife and park spaces beautiful, peaceful and wild.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: tdivoky@gmail.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 1:36:03 PM

If this rule does not fit Teepee Lake, than the rule will likely never be adopted. The lake is fairly remote, has had active nesting loons for decades, no need for a gas motor due to its small size, no significant safety issue requiring motorized craft, and exceptional moose and other wildlife habitat along lakeshore. Please pass the proposal to limit the lake to non-motorized watercraft.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: donnalovebooks@gmail.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 1:00:39 PM

As a member of the Montana Loon Society, I support the proposal to limit Tepee Lake to a manually operated watercraft only. What a spectacular place to be, and the lake has loons, so I hope it can stay a quiet lake.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: montanaloonsociety@charter.net
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 12:58:59 PM

The Montana Loon Society supports the Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft. We appreciate the Commissions hearing of this matter.

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: eeheger@hotmail.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 12:18:02 PM

Dear Commissioners:

We recently learned much to our surprise that motorized watercraft are permitted on Tepee Lake. This would seem like a regulatory oversight given that the lake size of 43-acres barely exceeds the 35-acre minimum for motorize use. Given the location and critical nature of this lake to wildlife and in particular nesting Loons. The petition provides a thorough analysis of the lakes value and importance.

My wife and I have owned property at 15640 North Fork Road for over 25 years. Our land and Cabin are several miles away from the lake but knowing that we can continue to visit the lake to enjoy wildlife and the tranquility of the lake is invaluable to us. With easy public access this setting can be enjoyed by all visitors to the area.

We urge the Commission to be proactive in correcting this oversight to avoid a potential future conflict and environmental damage.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Ed and Susie Heger

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: murphres@miamioh.edu
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Monday, December 14, 2020 11:40:45 AM

Please approve this petition limiting watercraft on Tepee Lake to those operated manually. Tepee Lake is an important nesting area for loons and its quiet is also important to the people who love and visit the lake. We all need a place where we can relax and reflect without noisy technology interfering. Thank you!

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: gbissell535@gmail.com
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft
Date: Sunday, December 20, 2020 2:05:57 PM

To FWP Commissioners,
In the matter of the adoption of New Rule I and the amendment of ARM 12.11.501 pertaining to limiting Tepee Lake to manually operated watercraft:

My husband, Richard Mace, and I are both retired wildlife biologists and landowners in the North Fork of the Flathead River with a small cabin about 3 miles from Tepee Lake. We are in total support of this proposed new rule.

Over the last 25 years, we have visited Tepee Lake often during the summer to view wildlife, watch or monitor common loons and their young, and occasionally paddle the lake. This is a relatively shallow, fishless, leech-infested lake, that lends itself to those folks who enjoy wildlife viewing, quiet recreation, and scenic values.

The North Fork is not a motorized boat destination area. There are very few road accessible public lakes outside of Glacier National Park in the North Fork. Mud Lake to the north is private. The public can access the small stocked Red Meadow Lake on Forest Service land and do so with small drop-in boats. The primary boating activity in the North Fork is the floating of the North Fork River. The two larger popular public accessible lakes in the North Fork (Bowman and Kintla) are in Glacier National Park where the public is limited to 9.9 hp motors if they use any type of motor.

Tepee Lake is a rare small lake that the public (and adjacent private landowners) use occasionally by kayak, canoe, or paddle board. It is an ideal location for passive recreation, wildlife observations, and scenic enjoyment. There are very few such public lakes in northwest Montana that are free of motorized users. There is a demand for such a lake and Tepee is an ideal candidate.

Most wildlife (notably a pair of nesting common loons, moose, and bears) and humans using non-motorized boats have coexisted on this lake for decades. This is the time to preserve this lake's unique characteristics; no users will be impacted and a non-motorized public lake can be preserved for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration of this new rule and the opportunity for us to comment.

Sincerely,

Gael Bissel and Rick Mace
535 Lower Valley Rd
Kalispell, MT 59901

This e-mail was generated from the 'Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption to Limit Tepee Lake to Manually Operated Watercraft' Public Notice Web Page.

From: tinalawrence@posteo.net
To: [Kilbreath, Phillip](#)
Cc: [Gangstad, Kaedy](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] notes for public comment-amended email and for release
Date: Friday, February 12, 2021 9:57:43 AM

----- Original Message -----

Subject: please notify us of all communications regarding Tepee Lake public and private ones
Date: 08.02.2021 15:12
From: tinalawrence@posteo.net
To: kgangstad@mt.gov
Cc: Alf Pfeifer <alf_pfeifer@posteo.net>
Reply-To: pkilbreath@mt.gov

Dear Kaedy,

Thanks for the phone call about Tepee Lake and the proposal for non motorized boats usage on Tepee Lake. I am surprised and deeply disappointed about not having been notified about this proposal. Tepee Lake has only one other owner, my family, since 1987, whose name is missing from the filing letter in the proposal to make Tepee Lake a non motorized lake. It is my family. We are Hirt, LLC.. My family owns acreage directly on Tepee Lake. We own eight tax notices, totaling over ninety acres. Originally, we sold the five acres to a Wayne Benson in 1988 making the today Kaminski property possible.

Its original ownership was Barbara Lawrence Klemptow and Lawrence Austin Meece and then it went into Hirt, LLC. still the same family ownership. since 1987.

Our original ownership was about 135 acres total.

Please put my husband, myself, and my sister on the Tepee Lake list to be notified of any and everything to do with the lake and in our neighborhood. We want to be notified by email and in regular mail for anything and everything in our zip code area, 59928.

Our mailing address is Christine M. Lawrence and Alf Pfeifer(my husband) 1100 Bellevue Way NE Ste 8 A 17, Bellevue, Washington 98004. Phone number 406 203 0885.

Please add to the list, my folks, Larrymeece@comcast.net, and Karen Voorhees, my sister, voortex@comcast.net.

We wish to attend the meetings, all meetings, in person or over the internet regarding any and all pending actions regarding Tepee Lake and also our general neighborhood. Please add us to the interested persons list, you mentioned on the phone.

Phil Kilbreath, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Enforcement Division, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, Montana, 59620-0701; or e-mail pkilbreath@mt.gov, and must be received no later than January 8, 2021. Is the name of the gentleman I will contact next.

There are only four owners on the lake, my family is one of them, we own parcels directly on the lake. We were not notified of this proposal, and we should have been. Tepee Creek runs through our property. The lake also has an outlet on our property.

Just to correct some misnomers about the lake, be advised of the following, the lake does have an outlet, and I believe the inlet might be under the water. The lake has had fish in it, both in the old days and lately. A neighbor planted fish in the lake, he told me about it. My grandfather used to fish the lake when I was a child. There has been motorized boats on the lake, little ones small craft not big, I have seen it a few times, thankfully the boats were small. and they were fishing.

Given the importance of the lake and the entire neighborhood, please consider this email as my formal request for a postponement of the next and what I am told is the final meeting to decide if this lake should be non motorized use or not. The primary reason being, none of the owners in our ownership group were notified, and this perhaps, on purpose. We would like to have equal consideration for the time allowed the others to prepare our thoughts and best interests for the neighborhood of Tepee Lake.

I would highly question the issue of how many members of the parties who make the decision about the lake have been up to

actually look at the lake in person themselves. Has any of the voting parties visited the lake in person in the last 10 months prior to deciding without proper public input the fate of the lake? I hope they have. The wildlife is of great interest care and concern to all of us, but so is the process in which large decisions made by those in rapid manners, impacting the neighborhood in a long term fashion are made. The proper and fair practice of such decisions matters in treating all parties with equal consideration. Why on a small lake in a small neighborhood, was no information sent out to my family?

There is a solar panel located actually in the lake itself, during high water season. This impacts the wildlife as well I am sure.

Please be so kind as to consider the postponement for a few months at it's minimum, such decision, so that as with all things impacting the desired results are able to be considered.

We thank you in advance for your immediate concern in these matters.

It was my family that sold the Wurtz Homestead to the forest service in 1987, making it possible for the public to enjoy it all, the river front, the slough and the homestead as it is now rented out to the public feasible at all. We understand the nature of these matters and we would like equal time consideration as the neighbors have had over our appreciated Tepee Lake, the lake itself and the neighborhood. We have recently had a lot of disturbance in the neighborhood by other shooting large guns quite often and this has not helped the wildlife at all.

Kind Regards, Christine M Lawrence, Alf Pfeifer and family, and all of Hirt LLC.

Tepee Lake Public Comment Hearing
Transcript of Comments

Linda Henderson: This is Linda Henderson, I'm in Missoula, Montana and I'm just speaking in support of not having motorized watercraft on Tepee Lake. The areas just unique in terms of the wildlife and the quiet solitude it provides without motorized noise on the lake and I would hate to see that go away. And I'm not representing any organization. I'm just representing myself.

Courtney Ludden: My name is Courtney Ludden in my family lives up on lane just beyond Tepee Lake, and I am calling to also vote my support in keeping motorized vehicles off of Tepee Lake. Echoing the previous caller it's unique it's special and it's peace and quiet. And right now there's a really sustainable balance of Private and public land use up there. And I think motorized vehicles would tip that balance in an unhealthy direction. And additionally, just I think large trucks pulling large motorized vehicles on that road would make that road almost even more impassible in the summer. Thank you.

Richard Hildner: Hello Kaedy, this is Richard Hildner 350 Moose Creek Road Polebridge Montana 59928 and thank you for the opportunity to speak and support an ARM to prohibit motors on Tepee lake and to restrict the use to human powered movement. Tepee Lake is kind of like an unspoiled mud puddle that has yet to be disturbed by kids stomping through it. The difference is that both the setting and water quality are pristine and should be kept that way, permitting motorized use is the equivalent of stomping through it without regard for the consequences. Support for this ARM is broad and I encourage you to approve the proposed restrictions. I represent myself only and I hope for a favorable decision by yourselves and the Commission.

Kurt Borge: Hi this is Kurt Borge and thank you for this opportunity to speak about Tepee Lake. My father, Olaf Borge purchased five acres on the lake in 1952 and we spent our family vacations building a cabin there 50 miles off grid and without any power tools. It was quite an education for us. It has been a peaceful retreat for us and for our neighbors and for all kinds of wildlife, including the loons and bears and moose. Its too small of a lake and too shallow of a lake for motorboats, about all you could do is, is go in circles, and most of the lake is very, very shallow, so a motorboat would really just stir up the mud and some of the algae that grows on the bottom that sometimes blooms. It would just pollute the lake and the noise I'm sure would chase away the loons because they don't like loud noises and the other wildlife, the four legged critters I'm sure would stay away, but it's perfect for canoes, birdwatching and just enjoying the tranquility there. So please keep Tepee Lake non motorized before someone tries to come in and be contentious and spoil it all. Thank you again.

Tim Their: Yeah. Hi, my name is Tim Their and I live in Trego, Montana, and I'm a retired biologist from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. And I also strongly support others in not allowing motorized vehicle boats and so forth on Tepee lake. It's a little bit, it's a gem in the North Fork, and it needs to stay that way. And I think it's important that we recognize that not only for Tepee Lake, but also other lakes northwestern Montana, I wouldn't mind actually seeing a review of other lakes to see what's appropriate and what isn't, because it's better to try to nip things in the bud before they get out of hand. So yes, I, I support not allowing any motorized boats on Tepee lake, thank you.

Rachel Potter: Hello, I'm Rachel Potter from Columbia Falls, Montana, I am one of the petitioners so you've heard a lot for me. I'll be a little bit briefer than I might be otherwise I just really want to emphasize that there's so many places you can take motorboats in Flathead County, in the state hundreds of lakes. And here's a place that visitors could come that is quiet and peaceful. But, easily

accessible. You can drive right there. I mean, yeah, you can hike into the back country, but this is someplace that lots of forest visitors when they find their way there can sit or paddle and watch loons. It's just really, really precious and we need to keep some kind of quiet rustic beauty, not everywhere, but we really do need it here and other people have stressed how small and shallow it is. I think that's really important. So thank you so much for your consideration.

Ed Hager: My name is Ed Hager I've had a place, my wife and I have a place a couple miles away from Tepee Lake for the past 25 years and, you know, if you look at the area I mean, to me this was a probably administrative oversight when the acreage number was set, which is understandable. But this is exactly the kind of piece of water that you know really can't accommodate motorized use. It's a few miles from a wild and scenic river, the North Fork. There is no other motorized lakes in the area and it seems like it should be a simple administrative fix and what worries me about this is one person. To decide this looks like a great playground, they could buy a parcel of land or they could take their, their machinery up there, whether it's, I mean even could be electric watercraft I'm trying to think of what to call the jet ski electric jet ski and there's a big enough lake that people that just want to play could do it. And, you know, there's probably little ski lakes here in the Valley and the Flathead that people would be happy to use. So it just seems like it'd be a really good thing to protect it. There's no demand to use it as a motorized lake and should that develop, then you have a whole different level of controversy. Anyway, thank you for your time, appreciate it and hope the Commission's able to follow through it, turn it into a nonmotorized piece property or lake, thank you so much.

Flannery Coats: Hi, Kaedy and Phil and fellow callers. My name is Flannery Coats and I live in Polebridge and I'm calling on behalf of the North Fork Preservation Association in support of the petition to keep motorized boats off of Tepee Lake. Most of the points I wanted to make today have already been stated, but I'll just wrap it up dirty and quick and say that there's plenty of lakes and boating opportunities up in northwest Montana that are great opportunities for people who enjoy that type of recreation and Tepee Lake shouldn't be one of them. And we just, our organization membership about the Loon habitat on Tepee Lake that's been well established and that the disturbance of motorized boats would be a threat, a serious threat to the loon population there and solitude is another reason that people come to the North Fork and motorized boats does not fit in that category. So I think it's just all the more reason that we move forward and ask the Commission to move forward with passing this petition and thank you so much for your time.

End of comments.