



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** October 28, 2021

**Agenda Item:** 2022 Fishing Regulations

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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**Background:** The department has a practice of providing recommendations for the fish regulation-setting process on a four-year cycle. The last four-year review occurred for the 2020 fishing regulations. Every four years, FWP seeks input from staff and the general public for ideas and concerns that might be addressed through regulation changes.

Regulation changes made the other three years (or “off cycle” changes) have been brought to the commission if they meet one or more of the following criteria: 1) Clarifications: when the regulation change is needed to clarify intent of regulation or to correct typos or other errors that led to erroneous information in regulations; 2) Enforcement: when the regulation change is needed to improve enforcement efforts, to prevent illegal take, or to clarify intent to reduce innocent violations; 3) Conservation: when the regulation change is needed to conserve or protect the population of any species; 4) Relevancy: when the regulation no longer has a real management purpose or value, and there is little public following, constituency or controversy; 5) Management Plans: FWP has committed to implementing regulation changes if certain events transpire (e.g., changes in fish populations, angling pressure, catch rates, etc.), typically based upon goals or management objectives defined through a publicly vetted process. Since 2022 is an “off cycle” year only proposals that were brought forward by Fisheries and Enforcement staff and meet one of the five criteria outlined were proposed to the commission. At the August meeting, the commission approved 19 proposed changes for public comment. The department recommends that the commission adopt these 19 changes and proposes an additional two clarifications that were not proposed to the commission in August.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** The department collected public comment on the proposed fishing regulations from August 27 to September 26, though two recommended changes in this package were not proposed during the August commission meeting. Sixteen comments were submitted through the FWP website, and one letter was received. Most comments fell outside the scope of this regulation cycle and were recommended to provide input during public scoping for regulations review in 2023. Three commenters supported proposed regulation changes or offered minor modifications to the proposals. All public comments and letters are provided as part of this commission package.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The commission could approve or modify the proposed fishing regulations that have received public comment. The commission has authority to adopt regulation changes not proposed by the department, but public support for those changes could be unknown due to lack of broad public scoping or comment.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the 2022 fishing regulations as proposed.