



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

PROPOSAL: Paddlefish, Intake Bypass Channel

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4) Paddlefish snagging is prohibited within entire length (2.0 miles) of the Intake Bypass Channel (closure defined as sections of the bypass channel with streambanks on both sides).

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Intake Bypass Channel:

Paddlefish snagging is prohibited within entire length (2.0 miles) of the Intake Bypass Channel (closure defined as sections of the bypass channel with streambanks on both sides).

Rationale (biological justification for proposing this change. Include how this change addresses a fisheries management problem):

The Intake Bypass Channel, at Intake Diversion Dam on the Yellowstone River, is a new fish passage route completed April 9, 2022. Objectives for the project are:

- Improve upstream and downstream passage for pallid sturgeon.
- Improve upstream and downstream passage for other native species (paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, sauger, and blue sucker).
- Channel meets physical and hydraulic criteria parameters (depth, velocities, and flow splits) within the channel.
- Maintain water diversions into the Lower Yellowstone Project Main Canal.

Pallid sturgeon inadvertently snagged within the bypass channel by paddlefish anglers could negatively impact pallid sturgeon migrations through the channel and reduce the project's success criteria.

Furthermore, fish migrations and hydraulic performances will be intensively monitored the first eight years of bypass operation (2022-2029). Prohibiting paddlefish snagging within the bypass channel is intended to 1) reduce paddlefish angler impacts to pallid sturgeon and other native species migrations and, 2) reduce conflicts between paddlefish anglers and monitoring crews.

Regulation Type (clarification, enforcement, conservation, relevancy, management plan, other):

Conservation and enforcement at a new habitat structure.

Public Engagement (summary of any public scoping or outreach that has been completed as it relates to this change. Includes public meetings, sporting group meetings, surveys, etc.):

Coordination discussions with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and monthly Technical Advisory Committee meetings for the intake project (committee includes at least one representative from BOR, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, FWP, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and Lower Yellowstone River Irrigation District). Extensive public scoping during 2022.



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Nonbiological Information (is there an organized advocacy for this change, controversy, other information that decision makers should be aware, relevant MCA or ARM to justify this change):

The intake project is a federal response by the BOR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to the Endangered Species Act to improve conditions for the federally listed endangered pallid sturgeon. BOR has requested closure of paddlefishing within the bypass channel for at least the eight years of intensive fish and hydraulic monitoring. This will reduce the risk and potential biases induced by paddlefish anglers on the monitored fish passage success within the bypass channel.