



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: Oct. 19, 2023

Agenda Item: 2024 Fishing Regulations

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 minutes

Background: FWP recently adopted a new fishing regulation process, moving from a four-year cycle to a two-year cycle. Previously, each year the department would review and update the fishing regulations based on established criteria, and every four years the department would use a rigorous public process to update the fishing regulations. Implementing a two-year process is expected to reduce staff time needed for fishing regulation evaluation while providing more opportunity for public input. With this change, a new regulations booklet will be printed only on odd-numbered years, with any changes made outside the printing cycle updated on the department website and through other public outreach and posting. The 2024 booklet will be the last booklet printed outside of the new process.

FWP is proposing 43 regulation changes along with the rest of the regulations as written in the current 2023 regulation book for the 2024 Montana Fishing Regulations. The accompanying regulation package contains each proposal in detail along with rationale, regulation type, public engagement, and connection to the Statewide Fisheries Management Plan for each proposal

Public Involvement Process & Results: Each proposal has had a varying degree of scoping with the public; details are in the regulation package. The public comment period for all regulation proposals will be Aug. 21 through Sept. 18 with public meetings held in each of the seven regions.

Alternatives & Analysis:

- A. The commission could adopt the regulations as is, requiring no further analysis by the department.
- B. The commission could propose other regulation changes, requiring further analysis by the department.
- C. The commission could choose not to move forward on any regulation changes rolling forward the existing regulations from 2023 into 2024; see details in the package for any impacts related to specific proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: The department recommends the commission adopt the 2024 regulation package as presented. Detailed rationale for each proposal is provided in the regulation package.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the 2024 fishing regulations as proposed.