



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** Oct. 10, 2024

**Agenda Item:** 2025-26 Fishing Regulations

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 20-30 minutes.

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**Background:** FWP recently adopted a new fishing regulation process, moving from a four-year cycle to a two-year cycle. Previously, the department would review and update the fishing regulations annually 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 2025-26 booklet will be the first booklet printed as part of the new process.

FWP is proposing 48 regulation changes, and the rest of the regulations as written in the current 2024 regulation book, for the 2025-26 Montana Fishing Regulations. Additionally, five public regulation proposals are included that were identified during the public scoping process earlier this spring. The accompanying regulation package contains each FWP or public proposal in detail along with rationale, regulation type, public engagement, and connection to the Statewide Fisheries Management Plan (FWP proposed regulation only).

**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. 19 with public meetings, held in each of the seven FWP regions and one virtually, during that period.

**Alternatives & Analysis:**

- A. The commission could adopt the FWP or public proposed 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 with any FWP or public proposed regulation change or roll forward the existing regulations from 2024 into 2025-26; see details in the package for any impacts related to specific proposals.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** The department recommends the commission adopt the FWP proposed 2025-26 fishing regulation changes as presented and consider the regulations proposed by the public. Detail for each proposal is provided in the regulation package.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the 2025-26 fishing regulations as proposed.