



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL AND INFORMATION SHEET

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Meeting Date: Oct. 10, 2024

Agenda Item: Intake Fishing Access Site - Management Agreement with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

Action Needed: Approve signing of the Management Agreement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to renew a no-cost Management Agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), a federal agency under the U.S. Department of the Interior. The agreement is for the management and operations of Intake Fishing Access Site (FAS) located 16 miles north of Glendive on Highway 16. The Intake FAS has operated on a 50-year agreement that recently expired. The site historically included two parcels: (1) The Intake Area north of the river, and (2) Joe's Island south of the river. The Intake Area includes a boat ramp, day use area, campground, and potable water system, some of which was installed by FWP. Joe's Island is a primitive area with no infrastructure. The proposed new management agreement would be for 50 years and would include the Intake Area, but Joe's Island would revert to BOR management. The FAS receives 20,000 visits per year, with the heaviest use during paddlefish season (May-June).

Public Involvement Process & Results: FWP reviewed the potential continuation of the current management agreement with BOR. Both parties believe the management agreement was effective and advantageous to the public. FWP analyzed the impacts of a new management agreement by publishing a draft checklist environmental assessment on July 23, 2024. The 15-day comment period closed on Aug. 7. No comments were received.

Analysis & Alternatives: The proposed management agreement would authorize FWP to continue to operate and maintain Intake FAS, including the campground, boat ramp, picnic area, and associated infrastructure that FWP has constructed over the last 50 years. Joe's Island sees low use, is difficult to access, and would not be included in the management agreement. Joe's Island is in the flood zone and includes four separate landowners (BOR, BLM, DNRC, BNSF), making effective management challenging.

- **Alternative A:** *This is the department recommended alternative* – The Commission approves the proposed management agreement with BOR. FWP continues to manage and operate Intake FAS
- **Alternative B:** The Commission does not approve the proposed management agreement. FWP would cease involvement at Intake FAS. Management of that site and its associated infrastructure would revert to BOR.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the Commission approve the proposed management agreement so that FWP may continue to operate the popular Intake FAS for the public's benefit.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission authorize Fish, Wildlife & Parks to sign the proposed management agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to allow the continued operation of Intake Fishing Access Site by Fish, Wildlife & Parks.