

From: [Richard Tramp](#)
To: [FWP Smith Rule Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Smith River bonus points
Date: Friday, September 8, 2023 4:24:00 PM

I really like the idea of a bonus point system on permits. It is a fair way of allocating permits.
Thank you
Richard Tramp

From: Curt Reynolds <crcas3@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2023 6:40 AM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Smith River Drawing

Team MT FWP,

I am not a fan of "Bonus Points." BPs are a great way to raise money for the Department but in my opinion don't really benefit special drawings applicants. Heck, if BPs really worked as described/intended, I would have drawn a Bighorn Sheep tag over 20 years ago. Nope, nothing, notta. I say everyone throws their name in the hat and MT FWP draws a certain number out. If you get drawn good on you. If not, better luck next year. Thank you for listening.

CR

From: Cory Horsens <coryhorsens@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 10:51 AM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Smith River Rules Comment

Hello Mr. Maas:

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Smith River float permit rules.

I have lived in Montana for 44 or my 47 years. I am an outdoor enthusiast and have had a handful of opportunities to float the Smith River, but I have never actually drawn the permit. The times I have been able to float the Smith were on other's permits or on a permit that was acquired via the cancellation hotline. In total, I have applied for a Smith River permit approximately 12 times with a 0% success rate in drawing. With the number of people moving to our state, coupled with the number of Smith River applications, it seems unlikely that I will ever actually draw a Smith River permit without changes to the current system.

I am in full support of a system whereby bonus points are awarded to unsuccessful applicants. I am also in full support of limiting the number of Smith River permits that can be awarded to non-Montana residents to 10%.

Additionally, I would support a more sophisticated method by which canceled permits are made available to the public. It seems archaic that a single individual would answer a telephone for four hours a day, five days a week for several months. Often, this phone line is busy. It is only staffed during morning hours during the week when most of the public is at work and is inconvenienced to be on the telephone checking on the availability of permits. Perhaps there could be a system whereby unsuccessful applicants could opt into a wait list and could be notified as canceled permits become available. Given the logistics of being available to travel to the put-in on short notice, I would suggest this waitlist be made available only to Montana residents as well.

Again, thank you for allowing me to provide comment. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide clarification as need.

Best regards,

Cory Horsens, Florence, MT
ALS: 12/08/1975-1
(406) 880-5955
cory.horsens@gmail.com

From: Jordan Perrego <jpreggo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 4:15 PM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Smith River Comment

Hello,

I do not support to new allotment of only 10% going to non residents.

When thinking about how much the state needs tourism in the economy, cutting the percentage to 10% is shutting down that possibility for the local businesses that gain from the out of staters.

Not to mentioned the active duty military members in state. How are they supposed to compete for a permit with only 10% could be issued to them when they live in the state?

Maybe consider is someone floats during a prime time (15 June-15 Aug) they should be able to put in again for a year or two.

I support the bonus point system but the 10% going to out of staters is just outrageously small.

Thanks,

Jordan

From: David Reid <davidreidok@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:21 PM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on Smith River permit drawing rules

I am a non resident and understand MT residents pay taxes that support the Smith River state park.

For some number of years now I and 12 to 15 members of my boating group have participated in the permit draw events and even won several permits to float.

The permit drawing season runs for many months but in reality the only permits that work for most all of us boaters is late april to latter part of June. This is due to low water flow.

On our group we treat the Smith River with the respect it deserves. That is leave nothing but footprints in places that do not destroy the ground. Smith permits are expensive to apply for and if a permit is won there is a per person fee that adds up. Us out of state winners usually spend motel time coming and going in usually Billings and for sure White Sulphur Springs. Quite a few meals. Then we usually buy a considerable amount of groceries in Billings or other larger cities. Add in the gas per vehicle and the very expensive shuttle fees and the dollar cost for out of state boaters is way up in the multi thousands of dollars. Basically free money to the state and MT motels, stores and other services.

As a out of state boater I can see in state boaters who actually float the Smith getting a discount on the float fee which is as of now 65 dollars per person. I could even understand if the out of state float fee was higher.

What I do not think is fair is restricting the number of permits released for out of state folks and increasing the fee considerably for the one any time permit.

I have enjoyed the Smith River a number of times and respect it and the State of Montana. On the other hand if the state does not want me as a respective visitor or the large amount of money I leave in the state, I am tempted to go to adjoining states to vacation. I think the decision makers are hurting MT income from vacationers by making it a lot more expensive for a very few floatable days ability to even join the lottery.

Respectively submitted.

David L Reid

From: Troy Running <troywrunning@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 8:00 PM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed Rule Change Comments

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the recent proposed changes to the Smith River float application process. These alterations, specifically the reduction of non-resident draw percentage from a true random draw to a mere 10%, drastically diminishes the opportunity for non-residents to obtain this highly sought-after float permit. Under this new system, the chance of a non-resident securing a permit is now less than one per day, a discouraging prospect for many.

I understand that comments on this matter are not currently being considered. Nevertheless, it is imperative to highlight that this decision will inevitably lead to a substantial loss for Native Montana businesses in places like Great Falls and White Sulphur Springs, as a result of less non-resident spending. Having personally applied for the past 12 years, I was fortunate enough to experience the beauty of this river last summer. However, with these new changes, I find it unlikely that I will apply again, given the increasingly minuscule odds. One of my main concerns lies in the economic impact that this decision will have on the small businesses of Montana.

During my trip, I contributed significantly to the local economy. I spent \$350 at North 40 fly shop in Great Falls, \$30 at Mighty Mo Brewing Company for lunch, \$250 on food at Super 1 Foods, and stayed at the campground in White Sulphur Springs. Additionally, I spent around \$70 at Castle Mountain Grocery for forgotten supplies. The shuttle service for my vehicle cost approximately \$100. I further supported the local economy by spending around \$150 at the Comfort Inn in Great Falls before departing. On my final day, I spent \$50 at Headhunters in Craig for a shirt and some flies, and enjoyed a \$20 lunch at Taco Treat in Great Falls. As a non-resident, my total economic contribution to this trip exceeded \$1000, a figure that a resident would likely not match.

Depriving these small towns of \$1000 in revenue will undoubtedly have lasting repercussions. I personally was born and raised in one of these small towns on the Hi-line and had to seek employment elsewhere due to limited opportunities. These reactive decisions are inadvertently penalizing the very businesses that rely on this trade, potentially resulting in their closure.

While I believe the introduction of a bonus point system is a positive move, further measures must be taken to safeguard the interests of small Montana businesses. I propose maintaining the bonus point system and increasing the non-resident draw odds from 10% to 20 or 25% of the daily quota. This slight adjustment would elevate the total number of non-resident tags drawn per day from less than one to around two. It would provide non-residents with a realistic chance of obtaining this permit within their lifetimes. As it stands, I am more hopeful of drawing a bighorn sheep tag than ever experiencing the Smith River float again.

I genuinely appreciate your time in considering my input, and I sincerely hope you will take these recommendations into account in future rulemaking. I was a proud Montana resident until the age of 22, and I still hold Montana close to my heart, considering it my home. My entire family still resides in Montana and I hope to someday return home to live. I only wish prosperity for its residents and the small businesses that define the essence of Montana. I unfortunately do not believe these rules that have been created have the best in mind for the residents of Montana

Thank you for your time.

From: [Gerald Brunckhorst](#)
To: [FWP Smith Rule Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My comment on Smith River Points system proposal.
Date: Monday, September 11, 2023 11:40:00 PM

Howdy! I attempted to send in my comment this morning at 8AM. I'm not sure it actually sent (gerbrunck@gmail.com)
Thank You, if it didn't send please return a message.
Thank You, Gerald Brunckhorst

From: Gerald Brunckhorst <gerbrunck@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 8:00 AM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment on bonus points system for the Smith River Permitting System.

Well howdy to everyone! My name is Gerald Brunckhorst, I grew up in White Sulphur Springs, MT. I've floated the Smith River approximately 20 to 22 times beginning in 1973 when the float wasn't well known or permits required. I've mostly floated with a small group, allowing 3-5 days. I have accomplish two, long solo canoe trips in a single day when high water and continuous paddling could carry me rapidly. I do feel the river is a part of me as well as privileged to have known a wild and lightly impacted time of the Smith. The river, large fish, wildlife once found there and the solitude are definitely connected to my soul. My last float occurred in about 2007, I haven't returned for reasons created by some of the disrespectful floaters and the amazing impact the Smith River has had to endure.

I'm mostly a supporter of everything MTFWP has accomplished over the 43 years I've really been paying attention. For the greater part of these years I've watched the MTFWP do amazing improvements to the rules, laws, enforcement and development of recreational opportunities throughout our state. I appreciate the opportunities we have to comment and make our thoughts known.

For the most part the Smith River Permit System has worked as it evolved. However the strain to balance use with demand has become all so obvious for far to long. I'm always curious when anyone returns who has also known the river as I have. We compare Notes, disgraces where found and improvements noted. The current permit system has definitely outgrown the rivers use.

When I first read about a points system I compared it to the hunting license bonus point system. However - I quickly realized this wss a mistake from nearly all angles. A river- fishing, camping, floating, etc. has a few similarities yet its use and those who are drawn to it are mostly a different crowd from the hunting public. I've now redrawn my opinion of a point system on the river!

As a lifetime Montanan I see the need to reverse direction at times to avoid the pitfall of becoming impossibly stuck. When the mud is deep don't proceed.

What I've learned from the Montana Hunting Bonus Points is when there is a way to cheat/beat a system it will happen! Todays social media reveals how prolifically those who aren't ethical or will attempt to cheat do given a chance, and they share their ways with others.

When I was a Boy Scout (Earned my Eagle Scout) we floated the Smith in 1981. At the time it was noted by quite a few locals how much trash existed in and near campgrounds and in the river. One of our goals was to clean campsites, the areas adjacent as well as areas safe enough to snorkel and dive. Our main finds ware aluminum cans, can pull tabs, batteries and plastics. Much aluminum foil was removed from fire pits while the cans were half burned or thrown into nearby bushes or the river. Batteries were actually eventually dispersed in the campsites as well as in the river near those sites. As I've written on the Save the Smith River site, we filled many large trash bags approximately 2/3 full, inflated them with air then towed them in and behind our boats. I tell you this fact for a reason. We recovered a tremendous amount of trash from the river bed snd banks. Plastics were usually in the dangerous form of six pack rings as was so common then.

Our river, a beautiful and amazing treasure, has been receding in quality of experience, fish and wildlife for quite some time. I believe it's time MTFWP chooses to stick to the lottery type permitting system "AND" reduce the number of all forms of permits across the board by 3-5%, applying those permits to the Last Wiahes program for terminal patients and kids and similar groups such as wounded Warriors, etc. A quality experien is what the Smith River is all about. The only favorable aspect I saw in the recent proposal was a limit on out of state permits by percentage. It's not a guarantee that we provide those who can afford to apply every year this opportunity. Many potential floaters knowingly admit a weakness to the system on their social media platforms. They already rig the permits in their favor by getting each member of a maximum party size to apply, because they can afford to do so! This immediately removes chances for single families and/or smaller groups who cannot afford to have each floating member apply. If they apply this same principal to the points system it will out pace less well off Montana residents, even when a percentage of out of state permits is applied.

Please consider my comments as you move forward with the new proposal. Although I feel we have permanently lost the river as it was pre 2000, I do want to return to the Smith River with my daughters and grandchildren in the hope the overall experience will creep closer to the original experiences of the past.

From: Samantha Schmidt <samschmidt406@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 7:08 PM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Smith River for MT Residents

Dear Mr. Colin Maas,

Please consider supporting some form of preference points or system for Montana residents to allow improved odds at being able to take our families on the special Smith River.

Our kids, a daughter who is 11 and a 9 year old son, said they would rather go down the Smith than have Christmas. It's experiences like the Smith that allows Montanans to teach their kids the value of experience and not things. As a kid who was raised in Montana, the experiences my family shared with me growing up shaped me as an adult and created strong values and connections with our public lands, waterways, and special places in Montana.

Thank you for taking my input to the public hearing on Oct 10th and all the work locals are putting forth in keeping this gem accessible to all Montanans, not just those who are here for a luxury playground.

Sincerely,
Sam Schmidt
406-360-6357
1221 Pattee Canyon Rd
59803

+++++

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is accepting public comment on proposed rules for a new bonus point system for Smith River permits.

The bonus point system rules were drafted in response to House Bill No. 846. The bill requires the rules to be adopted for residents and nonresidents. By accumulating bonus points a person could increase their odds of drawing a permit. The new statute limits the number of Smith River permits that nonresidents may buy to not more than 10 percent of available permits.

At its meeting Aug. 22, the State Parks and Recreation Board approved FWP moving forward with the rule making process. Public comment will be taken on the proposed rules from Sept. 8 through Oct. 10. The public comment period opened when the notice was published in the Montana Administrative Register by the Montana Secretary of State's office.

A public hearing to receive comments on the rules will be held via Zoom on Sept. 29 at 10 a.m. Zoom meeting information is as follows:

- Dial: + 1 646 558 8656
- Meeting ID: 820 2847 1950
- Passcode: 780988

Comments will be accepted at the public hearing and by mail and email. Written comments can be sent to: Colin Maas, FWP, 4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls, Montana, 59405; or emailed to: fwpsmithrulecomments@mt.gov. Deadline for written comment is 5 p.m., Oct. 10.

From: Stephanie Lauer <smulicalauer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 8:28 AM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments; Josh
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Smith River permit rules

Mr. Maas,

I'm writing to express support for the revised rules pertaining to the Smith River permit system (HB 846). It has always been challenging but a special occasion to get drawn for a Smith River permit. In recent years, it has been nearly impossible due to the heavy influx of non-resident interest in our state. In the last two years, I have known more out of state residents that have drawn permits than residents; there are simply so, so, many more people outside of Montana than live here. We are overwhelmed by the numbers.

Resident-paid state taxes and our license fees pay for MFWP programs, parks, and conservation efforts. Non-residents pay a small amount compared to what we contribute, yet they have enjoyed the same chances for a Smith River permit as we do. Thank you for proposing rules that recognize this, same as the quota on non-resident big game tags. Similarly, I would also like to see non-residents required to pay a higher application and/or put-in fee than residents.

Finally, I appreciate the bonus point system. This will help to ensure that the effort to put in for a permit each year will (hopefully) eventually be rewarded.

Thank you for your efforts and we appreciate everything MFWP does for our state.

--
Stephanie Lauer

From: Jennifer Oakland <jenniferloakland@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 9:02 AM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment: House Bill 846

Hello:

I write as a Montana resident and supporter of House Bill 846, which would institute a bonus point system and non-resident quota on Smith River permits. As a Montana resident for 20+ years, it is clear that the increasing pressure from out of state applicants to these valuable recreational assets has resulted in decreased odds of obtaining a permit to recreate on my local state lands. As a state tax-payer and a state land user, I support this bill, limiting permits to out-of-state applicants to 10%. Please consider my support.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Oakland
Missoula, Montana

From: Ryan Chapin <ryanpruittchapin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 9:56 AM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Smith river bonus points

Dear Fish Wildlife and Parks,

Please do implement a bonus point system for the Smith River. Also, I am supportive of a nonresident quota for the river as well.

Sincerely,
Ryan Chapin

From: Richard Carosone <poormanslam@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 3:28 PM
To: FWP Smith Rule Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2023 Bonus point rule

Move forward with Alternative A. Allow a bonus point system for Residents and Non residents for Smith river float permits.

Sent from my iPad

From: [Chris and Meghan Kiser](#)
To: [FWP Smith Rule Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment -proposed point system
Date: Thursday, October 5, 2023 5:42:44 PM

I'm writing in support of the proposed point system for Smith River permit drawings and in such of limiting the percentage of nonresident permits.

Thank you for moving forward with these items.

Chris Kiser
Clancy, MT