



# STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** March 12, 2025

**Agenda Item:** 2025 Public Use Rules Variances for Judith Landing State Park

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

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**Background:** In 2024, Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks presented deviations to the consolidated public use rules that serve all recreation and conservation properties administered by FWP (ARM 12.12.101-140). These deviations to the public use rules, now referred to as “variances”, are an important tool for FWP to ensure consistency and clarity while ensuring public safety and operational efficiency. The Montana State Parks and Recreation Board approved the acquisition of the Judith Landing property in December of 2024, and FWP officially acquired the property from the Montana State Parks Foundation in February of 2025. Now that the property is a state park, the department must establish public use rules, including variances, for the period of time between the acquisition of the property and when the property is developed (2026 to 2027, depending on the approval of funds for development during the 2025 legislative session). The department may bring additional variances to the board once the property is developed. The proposed rule variances are listed below with justifications:

- 12.12.109: Food Storage – proposed variances related to food storage rules that will be applied at listed sites to reduce wildlife conflict.  
Variance: Food storage rules apply.  
Justification: Consistency with nearby FWP sites and FWP recreation sites across Region 4 in response to expanding grizzly bear populations in north central Montana. Reduce potential human/wildlife conflicts.
- 12.12.113: Weapons – proposed variances related to rules restricting the use and discharge of specific weapons.  
Variance: Weapons restriction: Designated safety area – Hunting is not allowed in safety area; day-use area and parking area. Discharge of weapons prohibited, except for lawful hunting during commission-established seasons. Weapons restriction – rifles prohibited.  
Justification: Mitigate potential safety concerns while allowing for hunting opportunities during commission-established hunting seasons.
- 12.12-114: Hunting and Trapping – proposed rule variances related to where and when hunting and trapping is allowed within a site.  
Variance: Trapping permitted – limited to sets below the water surface only. Limited number of trappers allowed, written permission from FWP required.  
Justification: Trapping at Judith Landing has occurred for centuries. Fur trapping and fur trade were historically significant during the 19th century on the upper Missouri River. Trapping allowed and limited to sets below the water surface mitigates conflict with other recreational uses of the state park while allowing for this traditional activity to occur.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** The public will have the opportunity to provide comment prior to and during the State Parks and Recreation Board meeting on March 12, 2025.

**Alternatives & Analysis:** The board may adopt, modify, or reject any one or all of the aforementioned variances. In general, the proposed variances accommodate unique local circumstances.



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The board has three alternatives: 1) to approve none of the proposed rule variances; 2) to approve some of the proposed rule variances; or 3) to approve all the proposed rule variances.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** FWP recommends adoption of the proposed rule variances as presented. The recommendations support consistency and clarity regarding the opportunities and rules at Judith Landing State Park while also providing for public safety.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the State Parks and Recreation Board approve the proposed rule variances as presented by the department.