

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 13, 2014

Agenda Item: Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena Commercial Fishing Regulations

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Approval of Final Rule

Time Needed for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: FWP received an application for a 2014 commercial fishing permit to harvest carp via active seining from Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena. By statute, the FWP Commission is authorized to approve one commercial fishing operation for each body of water and to establish specific regulations regarding gear, limits, seasons, closures and any other limitations deemed necessary. This application is for a Class B Permit that requires a fee of \$200 plus a \$1,000 Surety Bond. The commission has approved the commercial fishing regulations for Canyon Ferry and Lake Helena for the past five years. The proposed regulations are included in the information package.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Commercial fishing regulations for Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena were originally approved by the FWP Commission in 2005 following public input and an environmental assessment. In subsequent years when the FWP has received an application to fish commercially on these waters, the public has been provided an opportunity to comment. For this application, one comment was received during the public input period from December 24, 2013 - January 24, 2014. The commenter expressed opposition to this proposal, saying that he liked to fly fish for carp and thought this recreational opportunity would be impacted by a commercial operation.

Alternatives and Analysis: The FWP Commission can approve or deny the proposed regulations as written, or revise the regulations and solicit public comment again. In response to the comment received, FWP believes that the high level of carp biomass in these waters combined with the annual productivity of this prolific species will provide for both a robust commercial fishery and ample angling opportunities. If the commercial seining operation proves to significantly reduce carp populations in the future, and this causes a decline in the quality of the angling experience, then the commercial seining operation can be re-evaluated. However, FWP believes effort to develop a commercial carp fishery has the potential to provide the greatest overall benefit to these waters. This is because reduced carp biomass may potentially translate into increased game fish biomass or desired forage fish biomass (such as perch).

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

FWP recommends approval of this application because of the potential benefit that a commercial operation may have on the game fish of the two waters.

Proposed Motion:

I move the Commission approve the regulations for a commercial fishing operation on Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena for 2014.