

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 12, 2015

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

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

FWP received an application for a 2015 commercial fishing permit to harvest carp via active seining from Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena. By statute, the F&W 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. At December meeting, the Commission again tentatively approved the regulations for a commercial fishing operation on Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena for 2015, pending public comment. 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 Commission in 2005 following public input and an environmental assessment. In subsequent years, when 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 Dec.12, 2014 – Jan 12, 2015. The commenter asked about commercial fishing regulations and harvest objectives generally, but had no remarks specific to this proposal.

Alternatives and Analysis

The F&W Commission can approve or deny the proposed regulations as written, or revise the regulations and solicit public comment again. 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 while also preserving ample angling opportunities. FWP believes effort to develop a commercial carp fishery has the potential to provide overall benefit to these waters, because reduced carp biomass may potentially translate into increased game fish biomass or desired forage fish biomass (such as yellow 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 2015.