

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: March 12, 2015

Agenda Item: Future Fisheries Improvement Projects—Winter 2015 Funding Cycle

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

The Future Fisheries Improvement Program continues to provide funds for projects that restore fishery habitats in streams, rivers and lakes for the benefit of wild fisheries. Applications are reviewed twice each year by a 14-member citizen review panel appointed by the Governor. Citizen Review Panel recommendations are forwarded to the Commission every six months for consideration and approval. For the Winter 2015 funding cycle, the Citizen Review Panel recommends funding 18 of 19 submitted proposals at a program cost of \$453,017.90. Matching funds, or in-kind contributions from outside sources, total more than \$2.44 million.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The public is informed about program funding opportunities via news releases, a public meeting, and information posted on FWP's website. The Citizen Review Panel conducted a public meeting to review applications, discussed proposed projects with applicants in attendance, and received public comment. No public comment was received at the meeting, except from applicants in attendance. All applications received for the funding cycle were posted on FWP's website, which allowed viewers to submit comments online. No online comments were received. Environmental Assessments (EAs) were prepared for eight of the 18 projects recommended for funding. Of the remaining 10, three projects fell under a categorical exclusion (defined under ARM), six will be assessed under the federal National Environmental Policy Act, and one had a previously-completed EA. The comment period for drafted EAs ended on Feb. 17. The State Historical Preservation Office commented that a cultural survey should be conducted on the Shanley Creek project, that a cultural survey on the Douglas Creek project is unwarranted, and that coordination of cultural efforts with the U.S. Forest Service should take place regarding the Stonewall Creek, Yukon Creek, and Theodore Creek projects. The recommended cultural surveys are underway and will be completed prior to project initiation.

Alternatives and Analysis

- A. The Commission could approve funding recommendations submitted by the Citizen Review Panel and as prioritized by the ranking committee. This would provide funds to assist in the completion of projects that will improve habitat for wild fish populations.
- B. The Commission could disapprove or modify the recommendations of the Citizen Review Panel. Under this alternative, applicants would need to seek other sources of funding or suspend projects that otherwise would have benefited wild fish populations.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission approve the funding recommendations as submitted by the Citizen Review Panel (Alternative A). Completion of these projects would benefit wild fish populations.

Proposed Motion

I move to approve the Future Fisheries Citizen Review Panel funding recommendations for the Winter 2015 funding cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.