

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: March 10, 2015

Agenda Item: Future Fisheries Project Approvals, Winter 2016 Funding Cycle

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Min

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 the 14-member Citizen Review Panel appointed by the Governor. Recommendations are forwarded to the Fish & Wildlife Commission every six months for consideration and approval. For the Winter 2016 funding cycle, the Citizen Review Panel recommended funding 14 of 17 submitted proposals at a program cost of \$458,508.20. Matching funds or in-kind contributions from outside sources total more than \$3.81 million, for a nearly 9-to-1 match.

Public Involvement Process and 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, discuss proposed projects with applicants in attendance, and receive 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 were prepared for two of the 14 projects recommended for funding. Of the remaining 12, one project fell under a categorical exclusion (defined under ARM), six have been or will be assessed under the federal National Environmental Policy Act, and five have been or will be completed via other processes. The comment period for drafted EAs ended Feb. 7, and two comments were received. All comments supported the projects. A summary of comments have been provided to the Commission.

Alternatives and Analysis

- A. The Commission can approve funding recommendations submitted by the Citizen Review Panel and as prioritized by the ranking committee. This alternative would provide funds to assist in the completion of projects that will improve habitat for wild fish populations.
- B. The Commission can 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 and Rationale

FWP recommends 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 Citizen Review Panel funding recommendations for the Winter 2016 funding cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.