

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: October 8, 2015

Agenda Item: Teakettle Fishing Access Site Temporary Closure

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

Teakettle Fishing Access Site (FAS) is located on the Flathead River in Columbia Falls on U.S. Highway 2. This three- acre site is a popular access to the Flathead River for angling and recreational boating. The site currently suffers from congestion and limited parking. On busy days vehicles are parked along both sides of the access road and along the shoulder of Highway 2 causing traffic flow and public safety issues. FWP proposes to improve parking and traffic flow by expanding the parking area into currently unused areas of the site and by redesigning some of the existing parking areas. FWP also proposes to replace the existing boundary fence, which is currently in a state of disrepair. The project would require a 30-day closure this fall to provide for public safety while construction is in progress. Three other nearby sites would provide alternative access to the Flathead River during this closure including: Kokanee Bend FAS, House of Mystery River Access (U.S. Forest Service), and Rivers Edge Park (City of Columbia Falls).

Public Involvement Process & Results

FWP released an Environmental Assessment on May 15 and initiated a 30-day public comment period in which 12 comments were received. Eight comments supported the project and three opposed it due to a lack of truck and trailer parking in the plan. In response, FWP adjusted the parking layout to include more truck and trailer parking spaces and released a decision notice to proceed.

Alternatives and Analysis

FWP identified a no-action alternative in the EA in addition to the proposed action. The proposed action was selected as the preferred alternative in the decision notice to address ongoing parking and traffic-safety issues.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission approve the project and the 30-day site closure for construction to begin in early October.

Proposed Motion

I move that the Commission authorize FWP to proceed with the Teakettle FAS project and that the site be closed for 30-days for construction to begin in early October.