



## MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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**Meeting Date:** August 15, 2019

**Agenda Item:** 2020 Fishing Regulations

**Action Needed:** Proposed      **Time Needed on Agenda:** 60 minutes

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**Background:** The fish regulation-setting process is conducted on a four-year cycle with the last four-year review occurring in 2015. During the regulation-setting process FWP seeks input from staff and the general public for ideas and concerns that might be addressed through regulation changes. Regulation changes made the other three years (or “off cycle” changes) must meet one or more of the following criteria to be considered: 1) Clarifications: regulation change is needed to clarify intent of regulation or to correct typos or other errors that led to erroneous information in regulations; 2) Enforcement: regulation change is needed to improve enforcement efforts, to prevent illegal take, or to clarify intent to reduce innocent violations; 3) Conservation: regulation change is needed to conserve or protect the population of any species; 4) Relevancy: regulation no longer has a real management purpose or value and there is little public following, constituency or controversy; 5) Management Plans: FWP has committed to implementing regulation changes if certain events transpire (e.g., changes in fish populations, angling pressure, catch rates, etc.), typically based upon goals or management objectives defined through a publicly vetted process. Since the last four-year review, 21 regulation changes have been adopted that meet one or more of the above criteria. This tentative fishing regulation package contains 44 proposals that encompass 57 changes, 18 additions, and 30 exception removals or language removals.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** This spring FWP staff discussed changes to consider with sporting groups, CACs, and other outdoor interest groups across the state. Additionally, the department hosted an online survey to gather input on 32 regulation considerations. The online survey asked respondents if they supported, opposed, or had no opinion on a regulation. It also provided an opportunity to comment on additional items contained in the survey and to recommend other regulations for FWP to consider that were not part of the survey. During the May 9 to June 21 comment period, 849 respondents participated in the online survey and another 32 emails and letters were submitted. FWP used these comments to modify proposals to be included in the tentative package. Some regulations were not advanced for further consideration due to concerns raised from public comments.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The commission could choose to approve the proposed tentative fishing regulations for public comment; not approve the proposed fishing regulations for public comment; or pick specific proposals to approve or not approve for public comment. The department recommends approving the proposed tentative fishing regulations for public comment.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the proposed tentative fishing regulations for public comment.