



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: July 25, 2019

Agenda Item: Willow Creek Reservoir Removal of Fishing Restrictions (R4)

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 Minutes

Background:

Willow Creek Reservoir is a 1,300-acre irrigation storage reservoir near Augusta that sustains popular rainbow trout and tiger muskie fisheries that are supplemented by stocking. FWP was notified by the Bureau of Reclamation and Greenfields Irrigation District that the reservoir must be drained to perform maintenance on dam infrastructure. Water levels are expected to be drawn down below levels that can sustain aquatic life. FWP is proposing to lift all fishing restrictions on Willow Creek Reservoir to provide the public the opportunity to harvest and consume fish that are not expected to survive the drawdown. Drawdown of the reservoir is underway, and the reservoir is expected to be fully drained by late August.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

There has been no public scoping or opportunity to comment on this proposal. Due to time constraints the department feels that immediate lifting of fishing restrictions is appropriate.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The department discussed alternatives with the Bureau of Reclamation and the irrigation district to avoid full drawdown of the reservoir, but timing and cost constraints precluded moving forward with other alternatives.

Proposed Motion:

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission lift all fishing restrictions on Willow Creek Reservoir until December 31, 2019.