



Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission

MINUTES

Montana Fish and Wildlife Teleconference Commission Meeting

FWP Headquarters – 1420 East 6th Avenue - Helena, MT

March 22, 2017

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Fish & Wildlife Commission
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**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

Commission Members Present: Dan Vermillion, Chairman, Richard Stuker Vice-Chairman, and Gary Wolfe (all via phone)

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Staff Present: Martha Williams, Director and FWP Staff.

Guests: March 22, 2017 - See Commission file folder for sign-in sheet.

Topics of Discussion:

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Restrict Boating on Waterbodies Designated Suspect or Positive for Invasive Mussels - Final
3. Public Comment – For Issues Not On This Agenda

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Vermillion called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Restrict Boating on Waterbodies Designated Suspect or Positive for Invasive Mussels - Final**
Eileen Ryce, Fisheries Administrator, explained there is confusion between this rule and the Department rule. Invasive mussel larvae were discovered for the first time in Montana in October 2016 in Tiber Reservoir and “suspect” detections were found in Canyon Ferry Reservoir. Invasive mussels rapidly cause significant problems by altering natural systems that support Montana fisheries; overwhelming lakes and rivers and the plants that help keep waters clean and productive; reducing water-based recreation; damaging outdoor equipment, including boats, motors, and associated gear; clogging water pipes and hydropower facilities; jamming municipal water supply lines; and choking off agricultural irrigation systems. FWP is responding to this threat on multiple levels including inspecting and decontaminating boats and equipment, monitoring waterbodies for aquatic invasive species (AIS), and increasing enforcement efforts at suspect and infested water bodies. FWP is also certifying boaters who primarily recreate on Tiber and Canyon Ferry as Local Boaters upon completion of an educational course and signing a contract with the Department. Local Boaters must decontaminate their boats if they wish to travel to another waterbody, but do not need to decontaminate each time they leave the water. The Commission has the authority to adopt boating restrictions through annual and biennial rules. In order to effectively decontaminate boats coming from infested or suspect waters, boating restrictions are necessary to limit access to and egress from Canyon Ferry, Tiber, and other reservoirs designated by the Department as suspect or infested. The proposed restrictions would allow local boaters to launch and exit at any ramp, but would limit other motorized use on impacted waterbodies to boaters launching and exiting a reservoir at areas where FWP has sufficient inspection and decontamination staff present to ensure decontamination. Boat ramps open for all use would be dependent on weather, ice conditions, and staffing, and would be posted as open to the public or open to Local Boaters only, as well as kept updated on the FWP website. Signs will be posted at all sites.

Action: Vice-Chairman Stuker moved and Commissioner Wolfe seconded the motion that the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve an annual rule restricting the launch and exit of motorized boats on waters designated by FWP as suspect or positive for invasive mussels to only those areas posted as open by FWP on site and on <http://fwp.mt.gov>, with the exception that individuals certified by FWP as “Local Boaters” can launch and exit impacted waterbodies at any ramp.

Chairman Vermillion and Ryce discussed the local boater program and how the program will work.

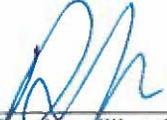
Chairman Vermillion asked for public comment.

Action on Motion: Motion passed.

3. Public Comment – For Issues Not On This Agenda

Action: Vice-Chairman Stuker moved and Commissioner Wolfe seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed.

The meeting adjourned 9:17 a.m.



Dan Vermillion, Chairman



Martha Williams, Director