

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 14, 2011

Agenda Item: Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena Commercial Fishing Regulations

Division: Fish & Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Final Rule

Time Needed for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

FWP received an application for a 2011 commercial fishing permit to harvest carp via active seining from Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena. By statute, the FWP Commission is authorized to approve one commercial fishing operation for each body of water and to establish specific regulations regarding gear, limits, seasons, closures and any other limitations deemed necessary. The commission has approved the commercial fishing regulations for Canyon Ferry and Lake Helena for the past four years. The proposed regulations are included in the information package.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Commercial fishing regulations for Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena were originally approved by the commission in 2005 following public notice and an opportunity for public comment. An environmental assessment was prepared to evaluate any potential impacts of this proposal on the human environment, and was distributed for public comment. The public was again notified of the potential adoption of regulations for 2011. The public comment period extended from February 11 to March 15. Two comments were received, both in favor of the proposal to harvest carp. One commenter expressed the desire for FWP to provide oversight of the operation to ensure it complies with stipulations in the permits. A particular concern was whether the permittee would truthfully report bycatch of non-carp fish species if FWP representatives were not present.

Alternatives and Analysis

The FWP Commission can approve the proposed regulations as written, revise the proposed regulations and solicit public comment again, or deny the proposed regulations. Public comments are supportive of approving the regulations, although one comment expressed concern about bycatch. This concern is alleviated somewhat by the fact that bycatch of fish species other than carp has been negligible in the past. Also, the permittee must submit monthly reports of harvest activity and this will give FWP some ability to track their activities. Even more, FWP will perform random spot checks of the operation, as it has in prior years and this will ensure an operation in compliance with the permit and low risk for damage to other resources.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Give final approval to the application and regulations as proposed.

Proposed Motion

I move the FWP Commission approve the regulations for a commercial fishing operation on Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena for 2011.

