Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)
Developing Recommendations for Managing Madison River Recreation
Madison River Citizen Advisory Committee (MCAC) – Meeting #Six
November 3, 2012 - West Yellowstone, Montana

Session Summary

PROCESS OBJECTIVES
Within the Advisory Committee's Charter, develop consensus recommendations around the following 4 tasks:

1. Review and assess river recreation information and existing conditions on the Madison River.
2. Identify and describe desirable or acceptable recreation conditions for the Madison River.
3. Identify and describe conditions that would warrant implementation of various management actions.
4. Develop a list of less to most restrictive management actions.

NOVEMBER 3 SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. Review additional Madison River recreation data; share trapline comments; hear public comments.
2. Within the agreed upon guiding principles and identified "interests", finalize draft desired River conditions (including fishing access sites); conditions that might warrant implementation of potential management options; the potential "less to more restrictive" management options that might be instituted under those conditions.
3. Affirm the calendar including the FWP Commission presentation in December.

MCAC MEMBERS PRESENT

- Robin Cunningham (PO Box 34, Gallatin Gateway, Montana 59730; 406-763-4761; rcunningham@montana.net)
- Joe Dilschneider (PO Box 1406, Ennis, Montana 59729; 406-581-5150; joe@montanatrout.com)
- Bob Gibson (311 Fieldstone Drive, Bozeman, Montana 59715; 406-587-4327; bobgib3@bresnan.net)
- John Juracek; (West Yellowstone, Montana; jjuracek@gmail.com)
- Lee McKenna (PO Box 86, Helena, Montana 59624; 406-570-1589; leemckenna2525@yahoo.com)
- Philip Naro (21 Crescent Point, Bozeman, Montana 59715; 406-595-6663; p.naro@wispwest.net)
- John Way (PO Box 625, Ennis, Montana 59729; 406-370-5206; john@montanaway.com)
- Virginia Tribe – Facilitator: vtribe@bresnan.net

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT
Pat Flowers (FWP) Chris McGrath (BLM)

COMPLETED AGENDA ITEMS

Comments Heard from MCAC Member Traplines

- A person asked about the legal foundation for controlling/managing/allowing or not allowing boat use in certain areas on the River.
- Some re-emphasized staying with the status quo until there is good information to support a change.
- Someone asked about status quo in terms of anglers - What are the angler use patterns of those not using commercial services?
- In terms of wading areas, MCAC members heard the following sentiments:
    - There is a clear interest in a wade section (example given - Town Bridge to Lake). There's no doubt that waders want a separate area exclusive to wade fishing.
    - A separate wade area supports the concept of recreational diversity on the River.
    - A wade stretch is appropriate somewhere (like Quake Lake to Lyons Bridge).
    - Many are all over the board regarding a wade area.
    - Some support the status quo from Ennis down.
- Outfitters are concerned that changes to the status quo could inadvertently bring huge benefits to property owners and their property values.
- Some affirmed the guiding principle related to protecting the River and fisheries.
- Some commented that many Montana residents/locals no longer fish the Madison – they feel displaced by boats arriving in wade areas or feeling crowded in general.
- Some were opposed to the suggestion of a $1 stamp because it would set a precedent for other rivers.

Moving Ahead in the Collaborative Process

<u>Working on "Walk and Wade"</u>

MCAC members had a great deal of discussion about "walk and wade" angler "interests" – particularly as it affects the relationship between boat use and wade angling in certain stretches of the River. That discussion was focused on the questions listed below.

<u>In general terms, what exists now in terms of "walk and wade"?</u>

- Ennis Bridge to Ennis Lake - Closed to fishing from boats; boats can pass by
- Quake Lake to Lyons Bridge – Closed to fishing from boats; boats can pass by
- Between Hebgen and Quake Lake – No prohibition of boats but very poor boat access
- Other areas not in question at the table

What "interests" need to be considered?
It is in our interest:

- To continue the mystique and lore of "the Madison" – even in these modern times - including a world class fishing experience – size of fish and quantity of fish; tranquility because of encountering fewer people; majestic scenery; and a clean, cold water river.
- To preserve the beauty of the River and quality of the recreation experience.
- To not have garbage present that spoils the experience and health of the River.
- To have an educated public who values and demonstrates etiquette on the River.
- To maximize the recreation experience by having congestion and pressure addressed through a variety of ways including having educated users who make helpful choices about locations – particularly during peak use times
- To develop management actions that are technically and socially feasible; legal; affordable, measurable; and enforceable because they will be effectively implemented.
- To develop management actions that fairly address all Madison River interests because that is the only way to produce an enduring and effective solution.

Which of the guiding principles are particularly pertinent related to this "interest"?
We believe that:

- River management solutions must be technically and socially feasible, legal, affordable, measurable, enforceable, and reasonable to administer.
- Use levels should be the consideration that drives decisions, not types of user.

What alternatives might we look at?
The MCAC brainstormed the following ideas about ways the walk and wade interest might be considered:

- Have walk and wade only stretch(es) as the only way access to fish; no float by
- Continue the status quo
- Have recreation float by without access to fish; walk-in the only way to fish
- Allow walk to wade and float to fish with no restrictions at all
- Reduce/alter boundaries of current "stretches" where wade does/could occur
- Possible "restrictions" brainstormed that might help in considering the interests of wade anglers include:
    - Day and/or time restrictions (for example - walk and wade in a particular strectch(es) only on Sundays and Mondays; could apply from opening day to a specified date in the fall; could apply after high water until a specified time when less appealing to baots and more appealing to wade anglers)
    - Specific vessel restrictions (for example - boats pass by but no rods and/or tackle allowed in the boats)

In the discussion, MCAC members found some agreement and some disagreement related to brainstormed ideas. While there were some things that MCAC members could mostly "live with" – they were not satisfied in a consensus sense at the end of the meeting with any one option explored. Their discussion and problem-solving on walk and wade will continue at their November 26 meeting in Ennis in addition to the remaining items from this November 3 agenda.

Is there a legal foundation for excluding/including/managing the presence of boats? What might be the specific consequences as a result of a rule change on boat use in specific stretches?
There is a legal foundation and precedent for managing boats on rivers in Montana. MCAC will evaluate specific consequences of possible options at their next meeting.

What might be the consequences of the status quo?
Status quo will be evaluated as one of the alternatives.

Upon what "fair standards/objective criteria" might the Committee evaluate options and move toward agreement?
"Fair standards/objective criteria" are referred to - as a principle/process piece in Appendix H of the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks River Recreation Management Planning Manual (page 42; and copies are in the MCAC Committee member notebooks). The Committee has not yet identified or agreed on "fair standards/objective criteria" related to walk and wade but will use that process piece to evaluate proposed solutions at their November 26 meeting.

Affirming the Remaining MCAC 2012 Calendar

- November 26 – Additional MCAC meeting scheduled in Ennis; 4:30 to 9:30 PM (location TBA)
- December 6 – Public meeting in Bozeman, FWP Headquarters
- December 8 – MCAC meeting in Bozeman, FWO Headquarters
- December 20 – MCAC presentation at the FWP Commission meeting in Helena