

MCAC - WORK IN PROGRESS

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)
Developing Recommendations for Managing Madison River Recreation
Madison River Citizen Advisory Committee (MCAC) – Meeting #Seven
November 26, 2012

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 26 SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Add to the Committee's information set - Review additional Madison River recreation data; share trapline comments; hear public comments.
- Within the guiding principles, identified "interests", and agreed upon "fair standards/objective criteria", work to 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.
- Affirm the Committee's calendar.

COMPLETED AGENDA ITEMS

Where are we in the process?

The facilitator reviewed the Committee's tasks from the FWP Commission; steps in the collaborative process and the usefulness of fair standards/objective criteria as a tool in the process; the Committee's ground rules and in particular, their ground rule for coming to decision; and a review of their draft collaborative framework as of November 3, 2012.

Working to Finalize the Draft Product

After preliminary review of the November 3 meeting discussion related to "walk and wade", Committee members decided to talk about that interest within the context of the whole River... and as they discussed the River sections they had described in earlier meetings. The following summarizes their **"WORK IN PROGRESS"** draft discussion thus far.

Draft General Recommendations

MCAC members tentatively agreed that the following are important general recommendations regarding the Madison River:

- “River-wide” data collection instruments should provide the capacity to “drill down” on particular stretches of the River in order to monitor/identify/evaluate changes to the desired condition and to query data in subsequent processes.
- Education should occur regarding River etiquette; littering/garbage; adjusting expectations about during peak fishing periods, etc.
- Consider a Madison River user endorsement/“stamp” or... for data collection and possibly funding in the future to support data collection, etc.
- Should management actions be needed, assure that they are tried for 2 years before moving to the next more restrictive level (with public process and to-be-identified exceptions).

Draft - River above Hebgen Dam (Park to Hebgen Lake)

The Committee tentatively agrees to the status quo with ongoing data collection and use as follows:

- Continue the 2-year biennium survey – “drilled down” (users in space and time) to monitor changes in the current recreation conditions in this stretch to include:
 - Who (resident/non-resident) is using the stretch?
 - How are they accessing it and what they are doing in the stretch?
 - When they are using it?
 - What is their satisfaction level in terms of their recreation experience (i.e., fishing, etc.)?
 - What is their satisfaction level with social conditions (i.e., crowding, etiquette of users, etc.)?
- Explore the “affordability” of opportunities for data collection tools (i.e., person-to-person interviewing through partners; “iron rangers”; survey attached to fishing licenses for those using the Madison; surveying through SRP; etc.).

Draft - Hebgen Dam to Quake Lake

While the Committee had been comfortable with the status quo, they agreed to revisit it as part of their discussion about the entire River and the “walk and wade” interest.

Draft - Quake Lake (Raynolds Pass) to Lyons Bridge

Desired Condition for this Segment of the River

Maintain this walk/wade section on the Madison River as a quality experience for wade anglers.

Draft - Quake Lake (Raynolds Pass) to Lyons Bridge cont.

Actions to do now

- Promote education on the walk/wade section including river etiquette.
- Redesign FWP surveys to measure use numbers on each section per the Committee's general recommendations related to data
- Install "iron ranger" devices to capture fisherman data related to use (Raynold's Pass, Three Dollar Bridge, Eagles' Nest).

Thresholds/Triggers that would warrant increased management action

Not yet completed

Least to most restrictive management actions

Not yet completed

Draft - Lyons Bridge to Ennis

Desired Condition for this Segment of the River

- Maintain the Madison River (and the Madison River's reputation) as a world-class fishery and recreation experience (i.e., River resources protected; diverse fishing experiences; positive and diverse recreation experiences).
- River aesthetics are valued and protected - Have no trash in/around the River; access sites are well-cared for and managed.
- Users wait no longer than 15 minutes (on average) to put-in at all fishing access sites on this portion of the River from the 3rd Saturday in May to September 30 (put-in waiting times outside of these dates are expected to be shorter).

Actions to do now

- Educate the fishing/recreating community to readjust their expectations during peak fishing periods (June, July, August) to protect the resource and increase opportunities for a quality recreation experience; suggest staggering time on the River where congested.
- Evaluate/redesign Lyons Bridge fishing access site to alleviate congestion at launch sites and parking.
- Explore the possibility of expanding the boat use stretch through a Pine Butte area access.
- Educate users about garbage/littering.
- Implement a Madison River "stamp" of sorts to capture user data.

Thresholds/Triggers that would warrant increased management action

Not yet completed

Draft - Lyons Bridge to Ennis cont.

Least to most restrictive management actions

1. All floating users required to “register” and display the registration on their craft for this stretch - no limit on numbers; commercial users register through SRP.
2. Restrictions may be added to registrations such as nominal annual fee (i.e., \$5.00); deadlines for registration; capping numbers.
3. Implementation of a capped, on-line/call-in reservation only system for craft use between 8:00 AM and noon during peak use periods (i.e., June through August).
4. More formal distribution methods such as defined allocations.
5. Close the stretch, banning, etc.

Thoughts about the Future Public Meeting

- Consider an information/display/ room layout that allows attendees to follow recommendations stretch to stretch on the River.
- Visually explain the tasks and concept of thresholds and “least to most” at the beginning of the layout.

Where do we go from here?

The FWP representative at the table as well as other members suggested that the Committee needed additional time to complete their work – beyond the scheduled meetings. After brief discussion, they agreed to postpone the December 6 public meeting but move ahead with the planned all day December 8 MCAC meeting in Bozeman. They also agreed that they will not be ready for a Commission presentation in December and asked that FWP reschedule - probably in February 2013.

Calendar

The Committee will meet in Bozeman on Saturday, December 8 at FWP Headquarters from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM with public comment from noon to 12:30. Additional meetings will be scheduled at that time.