



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** December 16, 2022

**Agenda Item:** Results of Madison River Work Group Recommendation Scoping

**Action Needed:** Informational Item

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 minutes

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**Background:** In June 2022, the commission directed FWP to conduct public scoping on recommendations put forth by the Madison River Work Group related to managing commercial and noncommercial use of the Madison River. The work group was directed by Administrative Rule 12.11.6710 to develop recommendations to the commission for approval regarding: (a) the allocation of commercial use trips to outfitters; (b) a process to permit new outfitters on the Madison River; (c) rule language to address all recreational use on the Madison River, including walk/wade sections and rest-rotation proposals to replace those in ARM 12.11.6702 and 12.11.6706; and (d) consequences of permit violations. ARM 12.11.6705 established a Madison River commercial use cap whereby the total number of fishing outfitting and guided trips per individual outfitter and guide is capped at the number of trips reported in 2019 or 2020, whichever is higher. In Aug. 2022, the commission extended implementation of the cap from Jan. 1, 2023, pending results of the scoping process, to upon adoption of an allocation method or a comprehensive river plan and rule package.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** FWP held a public comment period on the work group's recommendations from Aug. 15 to Oct. 14. This included public meetings held on Sept. 6 (Bozeman), Sept. 7 (Ennis), Sept. 8 (West Yellowstone), Sept. 13 (Butte), and Sept. 14 (virtual via Zoom). Public comments were solicited and submitted online. The department will prepare a summary analysis of the comments to be presented to the commission on Dec. 16.

**Alternatives & Analysis:** It will be up to the commission to consider the comments and determine next steps. Alternatives could include but are not limited to:

Alternative A: No action. The cap would not go into effect without an allocation method or comprehensive river plan or rule package in place.

Alternative B: Propose rules recommended by the work group.

Alternative C: Propose alternatives to rules recommended by the work group.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** The department makes no recommendation at this time. FWP will prepare a summary analysis of comments received during the scoping process for the commission to consider the comments and determine next steps.

**Proposed Motion:** To be determined by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.