



# Montana State Parks & Recreation Board

## Agenda Item Cover Sheet

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

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**Meeting Date:** May 13, 2022

**Agenda Item:** Smith River State Park and River Corridor Biennial Rule

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda:** 20 Minutes

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**Background:** At its December 2021 meeting, the Parks & Recreation Board extended the Smith River State Park & River Corridor biennial rules for one year to allow time for Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to update the Smith River State Park and River Corridor Recreation Management Plan. The Environmental Assessment (EA) Decision Notice for the updated plan was signed by FWP on February 2, 2022. At its March 2022 meeting, the Board proposed changes to the biennial rule to implement elements of the updated plan based on recommendations from FWP. A separate process to similarly amend ARM 12.14.120(14) is ongoing and would come before the Board again at a future date.

**Public Involvement Process:** The department received 91 comments (see attached Summary of Comments).

**Alternatives & Analysis:**

➤ **Management of Camp Baker**

**Alternative A:** Establish Camp Baker as day-use only with exception of September 1 – November 30. The rule would address natural and cultural resource impacts and congestion at Camp Baker and allow for a limited amount of camping during off-peak times. Registration and boat camp selection would occur via phone or online.

**Alternative B:** Allow camping at Camp Baker. This alternative would not address the resource impacts and congestion concerns. Historically, much of the overnight use was associated with first-come, first-served selection of boat camps. The phone boat camp selection process eliminated the need for this.

➤ **Human Waste Management**

**Alternative A:** Require all floaters to pack-out solid human waste using self-contained toilet systems with disposal at or near the Eden Bridge take-out. Sixty-five percent of the EA public comments supported this alternative. The rule would address natural and cultural resource impacts and health concerns associated with the pit latrines.

**Alternative B:** Continue using pit latrines. This alternative would appeal to floaters opposed to a pack-out system but there would still be natural and cultural resource impacts and human health concerns.

➤ **Smith River Fee System**

**Alternative A:** Increase fees. Float fees were last increased in 2003 (residents, outfitters) and 2010 (nonresidents). The revenue would be used for operation and maintenance of the human waste pack-out and disposal system.

**Alternative B:** Retain current fees. The current fee system would not provide enough revenue for operation and maintenance of a human waste disposal system at Eden Bridge or ranger presence at boat camps and on the river.

➤ **Outfitter Trip Transfers**

**Alternative A:** Strike language in the biennial rule that pertain to the temporary or permanent transfer of an outfitter trip (launch) to avoid conflict with § 37-47-310(4)(a), MCA. (A separate process to similarly amend ARM 12.14.120(14) is ongoing and would come before the Board again at a future date.)

**Alternative B:** Retain current language in the biennial rule pertaining to the transfer of a Smith River Outfitter trip (launch). Language conflicts with § 37-47-310(4)(a), MCA.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** FWP recommends Alternative A for all four topics for the purpose of implementing the updated recreation management plan and complying with statutory changes by the 2021 Legislature. The department also recommends that the Board amend the proposed rules to clarify that the pack-out requirement would not go into effect before there is a system for disposal of human waste at the Eden Bridge take-out.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Parks and Recreation Board approve the proposed changes to the biennial rules for the Smith River to establish Camp Baker as day-use only except from September 1 to November 30, require human waste pack-out using self-contained toilet systems when there is a disposal system at the Eden Bridge take-out and no earlier than January 1, 2023, increase the Smith River float fees, and strike language pertaining to outfitter trip transfers.