



## CHARTER FOR THE FRESNO RESERVOIR FISHERIES MANAGEMENT WORKGROUP

Fresno Reservoir in North Central Montana has been a popular fishery following impoundment in 1939. This mainstem reservoir typically supports an average of 12,350 angler days annually since 2001 and is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> regionally and 63<sup>rd</sup> statewide for angling pressure.

The majority of angling pressure comes from local (Hill County-73%) anglers, with surrounding communities rounding out the top 3 (Cascade - 9.7%, Blaine - 4.7%, Choteau counties - 2.3%). In most years the bulk (75%) of the angling pressure occurs in the summer months with limited ice fishing activity.

Following the introduction of walleye in 1957 Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) placed primary management focus on walleye. On most years, Fresno supports the highest relative abundance of walleye of any fishery in Montana. In addition, yellow perch, black crappie, northern pike and lake whitefish round out the fishery. Rainbow trout were stocked from 2002 to 2003 with limited success. In an effort to develop a more diverse fishery and satisfy requests for stocking, rainbow were again stocked in 2020. These fish were stocked as catchables (7"-8") in early October to avoid predation.

This will be the first official Fisheries Management Plan developed for the Fresno Fishery. This Plan will be completed in 2021 and will serve to guide fisheries management for a five-year period (2022-2026).

### Interests represented on the Work Group;

- Local walleye angler (Havre Area)
- Out-of-area walleye angler
- General angler/kids fishing
- Local government
- Local business

## **Role of the Workgroup**

The workgroup will provide recommendations to FWP and assist with developing guidelines for management of the Fresno Reservoir fishery. Primary issues include but are not limited to;

- Walleye stocking strategies
- Non-walleye fish stocking strategies
- Fishing regulations
- Bait use regulations
- Habitat enhancement
- Angling Tournaments
- Milk River water designation and reservoir water level management
- Research needs

## **Responsibilities of the Workgroup Members**

- This is a cooperative effort. Members will participate and assist FWP in development of management recommendations.
- Members are encouraged to reach general agreement or consensus related to recommendations.
- Members should acknowledge the value of fellow members' comments and viewpoints. If utilized, a facilitator will establish ground rules and encourage a climate of respect.
- Members agree to bring information to the process.
- Workgroup will function in an advisory capacity aligned with state laws and policies. This workgroup does not have decision-making authority.
- Members are required to attend every meeting. Substitutes or proxies will not be allowed.
- Members must be able to attend virtual meetings and be able to effectively navigate virtual meeting platforms.

## **Meetings and Timeline**

- Three meetings will be held during winter/spring 2021. All meetings will be conducted virtually.
- FWP will work with Members to schedule meetings.
- Meetings may be facilitated by a third party if it is viewed to be more effective and efficient.