



2020 Fishing Regulations Survey Monkey Comments

FWP hosted an online survey to collect comments on regulation proposals from August 19 to September 15. Two hundred forty five people participated in the survey, providing 417 individual comments. Respondents had the opportunity to view each regulation proposal and choose to support, oppose, or no opinion for each proposal. Respondents could also provide additional comments on each proposal. This document summarizes the opinion for each proposal (support, oppose, or no opinion) and shows all written comments provided through the survey. The survey also provided opportunity to provide comments on other proposals that were currently not proposed by the department. Those comments can be found in the final table. Comments provided via email, letters, or at open houses can be found in a separate document.

(Proposal 1) Definition of Snagging

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 1 Response	57 (25.1%)	34 (15.0%)	136 (59.9%)	227

No Opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
I'm against snagging regardless whether the snag hook is trolled, lowered, or cast you cannot be sure what will be snagged unless you can actually see the fish you are targeting.
Snagging from a boat drifting is about the same as trolling and should not be allowed.
The rationale is not true.. If you are snagging the chance of injury to other fish exists period.
too nitpicky! Leave it alone!
use lures or baits but any fish snagged has to be released.
Support
How about outlawing snagging altogether. Except during a section and time for the paddle fish?
I have spoke with many fellow fishermen about changing Sunday catch and release to include youth 15 and younger able to keep at intake to help out there chances without fighting the rush with all the adults. Thanks
Snagging is not fishing. The practice should be outlawed entirely.
Proposal 1 – Definition of Snagging – support
Other

Snagging should be allowed from still or stationary watercraft. Anchoring or tying off only. Due to increase in crowds and safety to those along the shore due to crowding, watercraft would “spread” out the fishermen. The risk of snagging non-target species is just as great on shore as in a watercraft.

Western Fishing District

(Proposal 2) Western District Bass Standard Regulation

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 2 Response	20 (12%)	77 (46.4%)	69 (41.6%)	166

No Opinion

The entire flathead river should be barbless. Not just to bridge. It’s sad to watch the fish population diminish past the bridge because people don’t care about the health of the river.

When it comes to Bass in our western waters I like to see it! I'm 55 now waited all my life to catch & eat a Bass what a thrill to catch & just as good to eat! They need to be a part of the system!

Oppose

As part of Proposal 2 to change the standard regulation of Bass in the Western District, the Department would separate regulation of Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass and set a possession limit on Smallmouth Bass of 15 daily and in possession. I do not feel that treating an illegally planted, aggressive species as a normal game fish and as such believes that setting limits and seasons is consistent with the intent of the Unauthorized Placement of Fish rule (ARM 12.7.1501). The proposal itself notes that there have been 18 confirmed illegal introductions of Smallmouth Bass in the past years and that Smallmouth Bass can outcompete native fish populations. During the scoping process, 68% of respondents supported no possession limit for illegal Smallmouth Bass, but the Department decided to include a 15-fish limit, which moves down the road toward making this dangerous invader an accepted part of our fishery and establishing more illegal populations in Western Montana. I suggest reverting to the original no possession limit in the final regulations.

Change Kokanee limits on Bitterroot Lake to 10 Kokanee over 12 inches.

Continuing to limit opportunity by targeting specific species for annihilation is counter productive. Native or not, bass fishing is enjoyed by thousands of anglers each year, and bottom line, should have all the protection as any other fishery. Do your job of creating

opportunity, and stop picking and choosing what should or shouldn't be in a certain body of water. The best fishing opportunities in NW Montana are all from introduced species

Dear Montana FWP, as a member of the fishing community I feel the removal of no size limit on smallmouth bass will be devastating for the smallmouth population. I agree that there should be a limit for smallmouth, but 15 in daily possession and no size limit does not seem fitting. A limit in there in place for people to follow and some do, but there isn't always someone there to be enforcing these laws. Some angler maybe not be able to distinguish the difference between smallmouth and largemouth. I agree small mouth need to be managed, but with this proposed regulations I feel it would negatively impact the population. Big smallmouth bass takes years and years to grow before the reach that trophy class potential and with the "no size limit" proposal, I feel all the large smallmouth that roam the lakes will be decimated. I would not be apposed to a 15 fish limit if it were limited to 12 inches and under and 1 fish over that 22" mark. Thank you for taking time to read our public comments and I sure hope you take into consideration the thoughts and opinions of the fishing community.

Do not take out the bass limit

I believe that bass fishing provides a boost to the economy and removing limits for possession will decimate the population.

I do not agree with this change. For the simple reason that most people can't tell the difference between largemouth and smallmouth bass . And there's been a lot more people fishing for both with the increase of population in western Montana. We could lose at all .

I do not support the 15 fish limit for smallmouth bass, once this large limit goes into effect the public will be confused on which lakes they can decimate the smallmouth in. We are already seeing a large decrease in smallmouth on Noxon due to the increased pressure by frustrated Walleye fisherman that seem to keep every fish they catch.

I do not support the Smallmouth plan to reduce them in the Lakes I believe the small mouth or a great Fishery and if managed correctly we could have a great fish Reef or not just my mouth but other species as well I also do not support the opening the spawning I believe we could have great Fisheries for different species if everything is managed correctly

I don't mind an increased limit on Smallmouth and wish the illegal introductions would end but part of my objection is that many people can't tell the difference between Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass. When I take friends out fishing that don't fish all the time they just don't know the difference. My second objection deals with enforcement. I spend 20 to 40 days a year on the water in Northwest Montana and have for forty years - only twice have I been stopped by your Wardens. And both times checking for lifejackets - never for a livewell check or fish limit check. With usual department funding needs I don't see the needed enforcement to oversee these changes. The probable result will be an over harvest of Largemouth.

I don't mind seeing some increase in smallmouth limit, but 15 seems to be excessive. I would think 5 any size would be good. One thing I really don't want to see is the spawning closure being lifted. There are just too many people out there that don't know the difference between smallmouth and largemouth bass. We have such a great fishery for them right now. It would be a shame to see it destroyed. And I'm sure that is what would happen. Doesn't seem there's enough law enforcement around to enforce this law.

I feel the status quo, current regulations are good. The spawning closures are very important for protecting the older age class of L.M. Bass. Lifting one closure will guarantee the harvest of both during spawning. I feel ethically that spawning fish should be protected no matter the species.

I recommend the regulations stated below. This would be very simple and consistent throughout the region. I feel this would protect the trophy Large Mouth Bass Fishery and put more control on the Small Mouth Bass Fishery. Note that I am also recommending shortening the Spawn Closure period on area lakes. Large Mouth Bass: 5 daily and in possession only 1 greater than 12". Small Mouth Bass: 5 daily and in possession no size limit. Combined Limit: 5 SM and 1 LM daily and in possession, no size limit. Spawning Closure for both species – Third Monday of May through June 14 for all lakes with the exception of Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Reservoirs which would have spawning closure June 15 – July 14.

If smallmouth bass are a problem then allow the use of spearfishing for them. There are very few species of fish that you can spear in Montana and the ones you can spear are so small that most people are not interested in taking up the sport. If you allowed spearfishing for these smallmouth bass it would help bring their population numbers down along with traditional pole fishing. It would also open up the public to a different style of fishing with the chance to catch something they can be proud of

In western Montana Bass fishing is alive and provides a steady revenue to local business's. Your past attempts at poisoning / eradicating certain fish have failed miserably. If you remove the limits this will have a huge impact on an awesome part of our angling diversity. Quit trying to play God.

Just because a fish is non native to me does not validate a kill off. I have in the past two years stopped fishing for trout and picked up bass fishing due to it is so much more entertaining for me to go target the species. 5 years ago I never heard of any bass tournaments and hardly any one fished for them no I see a Montana Bass Nation tournament regularly and I'd have to say that my town of Libby and surrounding towns do get an economic boost from these. I would hope that a fish not being native would not ultimately mean its demise. If you change the limits during spawning people will target the larger bass that are sitting on a nest and if they are able to keep it before too long there won't be a bass species for anglers to target. I've lived in northwestern Montana for over 20 years and have only seen your precious trout thrive in multiple bodies of water. I do not feel that trying to eradicate the small mouth bass or large for that matter is a very thought out plan. Surely a broader range of species for anglers to target isn't changing the ecosystem that much. Please leave the regulations alone

Leave our world class small mouth fishery alone!!! Especially in Echo Lake!
Leave the smallmouth bass ! Way more fun to catch then trout ! Anyday ! Tired of trout trout trout !!!!
Let's not just think of sport fishermen. Many people rely on catching and eating fish. This has become a rich mans sport rather than a way for others to live. Let people catch and eat the fish. This is everyone's land
Please leave the small mouth alone some of these lakes have become unbelievable fisheries
Please limit smallmouth to only 5 fish limit and maintain a spawning closure. Having no spawning closure will adversely effect Largemouth Bass as well since some anglers will not know the difference.
Smallmouth Bass. I oppose the 15 daily and in possession limit on smallmouth and suggest a 5 daily and in possession limit, no size limit on smallmouth. Largemouth Bass. I support the 5 daily and in possession, only 1 greater than 12" Largemouth Bass. I support the spawning closure for Largemouth Bass, third Monday of May through either June 15 or June 30. Smallmouth Bass, I oppose removing the smallmouth bass spawning closure. Impacts to spawning largemouth bass will be increased by anglers who are not familiar with the differences in species. I oppose the spearing on all bass in Seeley Lake, to control smallmouth bass. Largemouth bass were legally stocked using tax payer money and not a threat to the overall fishery. I would suggest adding Echo Lake, Flathead Lake, Lower Flathead Rive below Kerr Dam and Loon Lake (Lincoln County) to waterbodies exceptions for bass where regulations remain unchanged .
So thirty years of bass management goes out the window? A little education to anglers could address this. Most of the waters already have established populations of Smallmouth that have been present for more than 10 years. Management plan should include education for anglers to identify Smallmouth Bass. Also establish a 5 fish limit without size restrictions open entire year. This would reduce populations to smaller size and promote memorable sized fish, just like Largemouth.
The FWP wants to suppress any and all species of fish in Montana that are not trout. The funny thing is that most of the trout species they support are not native to Montana. There are people in Montana that like to catch fish other than trout. The bass limit should be 5 with one over 22 inches.
There needs to be a size slot on the small mouth bass. Especially on Noxon Reservoir, where the tournaments are held. Need to lower amount to 5 daily on small mouth and 10 in possession.
There should be no restrictions on the fishing for, and possession of, any specie of bass and northern pike. Reduced limits on mountain whitefish should be implemented, given the reduction in their populations over the past several years.

These fish have created many opportunities for fishing. These are sport fish and almost all the lakes that have these fish are lake with non native fish anyways. Lake Trout, and rainbows in McGregor, Rainbows, Kokanee, Camloops Bitterroot. These are land locked and will not effect any trout fishery. Many people have been happy to be able to get out and catch these fish. I live close to Bitterroot and there is always some kids at the dam having a good time catching these fish. Until now unless you had a boat you just didn't catch anything from the shore. Again almost these lakes did not traditionally have any native fish in them except for suckers. So what makes one non native sport species be managed over another if the body of water only has non native species in it except for trash fish?

While I understand the negative consequences of bucket biologists, I think the liberalizing of smallmouth limits is unwise. Environments shouldn't be managed based on utopian ideas of what was, but on what is. Have introduced species ever been controlled by sport fishing? All this does is breed contempt for smallmouth as a trash fish. I understand that sport fishing can have some impact, but never enough -- witness Flathead Lake and Yellowstone Lake and lake trout or Canyon Ferry and walleye. Time to accept smallmouth are forever a part of the ecosystem and manage accordingly. What's with the pike regulations in Lake Mary Ronan? For Draconian rules as proposed you should at least tell anglers why they have to make a delivery of their fish to FWP.

While it is understood that small-mouth bass have been introduced illegally, it does not change the fact that a large and ever growing number of anglers enjoy and targeting s.m. bass. While I am not a biologist I question their true impact on other fish populations, and would love to see a relevant study on the SM bass' impact on western districts waters. Many of the most popular lakes in the Western district that contain smallmouth, (and have had them in these lakes for many years), continue to have some of the best, most diverse, and enjoyable fish populations around. Lakes such as Echo/Abbot/Peterson, Little Bitterroot, and Dickey lake continue to have some of the best salmon, trout, and pike fishing in the area, and are destinations for many anglers to fish a diverse range of species. I feel that these are drastic changes, that don't need to be in place, as bass seem to suddenly be the "bad" fish that we seem to target every few years similar to pike, and walleye in the past. While I don't support the so called "bucket biology" that has introduced these fish into many lakes, I grow increasingly frustrated with the lack of management, support, and cultivation on FWP part for any fish other than seemingly native fish species, and specifically the bulltrout, and westslope cutthroat. Why not help cultivate waters specifically for species such as large and smallmouth bass, northern pike, perch, and walleye? Clearly they are species that anglers want in some waters, and enjoy catching. It may help to prevent transfer and illegal planting of these fish, if people didn't feel like it was the only method to get these fish in the area? I also find the fact that you are trying to prevent a laughably small number of bulltrout being caught, by closing waters to pike fishing hysterical, and baffling. Not only are you doing more to protect the pike in this case, but you are also neglecting all other methods of fishing which are just as likely to lead to the catching a bulltrout. I think that you are well aware of this, as well as the outcry you would receive if this affected other anglers that are fishing for trout most notably. On that subject, I also find it laughable that limiting hooks to single hook to help mitigate damage to

cutthroat trout as your solution. I am certain the the majority of fish caught are already on single hooks, and specifically flies. It's clear that the number of fisherman as well as proper technique for handling fish seems to be the problem, and not the actual method of landing these fish. In summary, I am all for conserving our wonderful fisheries, but this seems like a blind, poorly thought out, and quite frankly uneducated attack on several species that anglers are happy to have, and enjoy catching. In talking with a great deal of anglers around the area we have felt for a number of years that any species not called trout has been thoroughly neglected, and that FWP has been completely disconnected and out of touch with anglers that target these species. I urge you to please rethink these proposed changes to bass regulations, specifically the small-mouth, and urge you to focus more effort on growing, and conserving populations of many of the local warm water species. Thank you.

Why would you protect pike to save bull trout?? Makes no sense. Teach people the difference between bull trout and pike if that's the reason.

With 18 confirmed illegal introductions and likely that many more unreported, there is no justification for treating illegal smallmouth bass as game fish by setting limits and seasons. All smallmouth bass should be mandatory kill in the Western Region.

Your just setting it up for tournaments

Support

I agree on the illegal introductions, and they are wrong. But i do believe there not all bad and more multispecies lakes need to be available, trout seems to be a main focus in Montana. Like what is being done on flathead, lake trout, better management practices could be made creatively to help control these fish so people can enjoy them as well while controlling the populations. That may also help to prevent people from doing bucket biology.

Leave the Bass alone.

Smallies are fun to catch, but mostly too small to eat anyway.

The Flathead river system should be barbless hook only from top to bottom

There should be a very severe punishment of persons involved in introducing non-native fish in any water.

To discourage illegal introductions could Water without smallmouth bass, walleye or pike be designated as illegal to fish for those species And if introduced make it mandatory catch and kill

Why are we going to waste time and money killing a fish that will prosper in a water system that isn't friendly to native fish anymore. Dams and climate change are changing the water, let's allow some natural selection and preferences for game fish to have some influence. Spending millions to save a fish (bull trout) we will likely never be allowed to harvest is a waste

Other
Do not increase limits instability bass
There are not enough enforcement to manage any these regulations which sucks, people are destroying the fishing in are state because of that. small mouth and large mouth are a great money maker in are western part of the state if managed properly. taking out the 12" or less would help for better quality of fish, but there is to many people that do not care about spawning closures or limits, which is unfortunate, i have seen first hand coolers full of small mouth and large mouth at the ramps and confronted them and they simply say who is going to regulate me and they laugh. i would like to see all fish thrive and they can in the same body of water, Canada and Minnesota, Wisconsin all have proved this by the right management of there fisheries
treble hooks must be banned in all areas of the Flathead River System-the fishery is being ruined by treble hooks. We have to protect our fisheries and their populations.
You people have no IDEA what you are doing with the fish Numbers and what people want...

(Proposal 3) Bull Lake Northern Pike

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 3 Response	35 (20.6%)	13 (7.6%)	122 (71.8%)	170

No Opinion
Again enforcement is crucial. New rules without enforcement don't mean much.
Oppose
A simple regulations change. Northern pike from 16-30" no limit Fish from 31"-40" released, and only one fish over 40". This is a tried and proven management plan implemented by several states and Canadian provinces.
I am not in favor of spearing of any game fish.
Spearing through ice creates many hazards if you could get them to mark there holes that would be great
Support
Additional lines through the ice is a much better option.
I also think that with some effort, you easily could allow for additional lines for pike fishing. I think that the benefit gained by harvesting potentially more pike from the waters far out ways the small chance of by-catching a bulltrout. Further I think that an allowance for more tip-ups would be great for the entire Western district would be fantastic. A good compromise would be to allow the purchase of an addition stamp on our license that would allow use of an additional line. This gives the best of both worlds as it provides more income for further conservation, and allows the more dedicated anglers an option for additional lines.

I think the spearing is great and the fishing derbys bring in so many people. The thing I have not liked about what this fish and game do is they have been going in and shocking the fish and throwing them away which in my opinion and numerous others is horrible. Let the people fish, the people who will great fully eat these delicious dish. They do not need to be wasted. Pike may be called a garbage fish but that does not mean they should be thrown in such a place. Wolves also shouldn't be here but yet here they are and you fish and game people protect them more than most things that need to be protected. Fish and game is not for the animals they are for themselves.
More spear fishing needs to be allowed! And not just limited to northerns
PISS on the Bull trout...What good are they....?
Please consider spearfishing during open water. It would fit in the same as this regulation guided by the UPFA.
Strongly support the new spearing option on Bull Lake. It opens another whole chapter is taking trophy pike from this lake. The fishing days have already tripled in the past few years. This should increase it again.
Summer spearing should be available for divers also.
the Bull trout are just as highly aggressive as all the other predator fish that all eat each other, the bull trout are fine all over in western MT
The FWP complained about the pike showing up in Swan river system, yet only allow 2 lines per person are allowed. This has never made sense not even with the excuse that they wanted to protect other species. I feel that is a lame excuse by the fwp to protect bull trout, cutthroat... Have fwp asked what specific species of fish they would go after? They wanted to extricate walleye from many lakes when they showed up, again ask a fisherman what he prefers, myself I would pick walleye over trout any day. I truly believe they place to much emphasis on bull trout and cutthroat then on what people want to really fish for. I also truly believe that fwp purposely extricated the salmon population from Hauser Lake, one with enforcing very poor regulations. Fish learn to adapt to their environment and to live with other fish predators or not. Just look at Fort Peck, Montana's greatest fishing reservoir and holds over 50 species of fish, learn something from this fishery your doing the right thing here and please don't make the remark "It's Much Larger" because I believe it will work on any body of water in this state...
There should be a requirement to marking holes in the ice over 18". This way to help avoid someone from falling through an old hole.
To minimize the numbers
Would like to see spearfishing allowed as an additional means of harvest.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 4) Clark Fork River Bass

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 4 Response	28 (17%)	46 (27.9%)	91 (55.1%)	165

No Opinion
YOU guys don't have a clue on Management....
Oppose
Didn't I just read there weren't going to be any changes in the regulations on Noxon? Once again the Largemouth are going to suffer with misidentification of the two species of bass and little enforcement.
I believe we need more large fish fisheries. And the size limits are important on any body of water.
I oppose the "no limits" on walleye. Your own data supports limited predation so manage these fish as well as other species.
I would like there to be a limit on the walleye
I would much rather eat a bass than a cutthroat trout any day. Chill out on protecting cutthroats no matter if they inhabited our waters a hundred years ago, things change..
I would recommend 5 fish only one over 12" for Large Mouth Bass and 5 fish of any length for Small Mouth Bass. Remove the 1 over 22" during the Spawning Closure.
No way fish & game planted them and one of the best fishery in the state. Waters to warm most of the time. Protect this fishery
Picking and choosing one species over another is not biology, it is social management. The best fisheries in NW Montana are all introduced species, and if it wasn't for introduced species we wouldn't have *#!? to fish for. I am not an advocate for bucket biology, but manage what's in a body of water for opportunity. Name me one body of water where walleye wiped out a trout fishery. You can't because it hasn't happened. Stay in the what is and out of the what if. Management for worst case scenario is not biology, it is a misguided attempt at hanging public opinion of a very vocal minority.
Please maintain the spawning restrictions on all waters from June 15th - July 15th. It makes is too confusing if some waters have it and other do not.
Should be no limit on invasive smallmouth bass and largemouth should be 15/day
The no limit on Walleye is a very bad management practice and needs to be halted on all bodies of water in Montana!
We have a great bass fishery. Let's keep it that way.
What is this the year of killing off our bass fishery? Leave it alone.
Support
Allow use of bait for pike year around from Perkins Bridge to mouth of Flathead River.
I value native trout conservation.
Leave the Bass alone
Make the regulations simpler
put a limit of 5 on walleye.
Remove or Raise limit on smallmouth.
This is the same management plan implemented in Minnesota, Wisconsin and several Canadian Provinces. It should be for all waters in the western Fishing district.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 5) Dry Bridge Pond

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 5 Response	55 (33.1%)	9 (5.4%)	102 (61.4%)	166

No Opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
DRy Bridge should be pond for kids to fish. Fish should be stocked earlier in the year while the waters are colder. I live in that area and see kids there all the time fishing.
If stocked "Non-Native" fish are stocked into any water and "will not survive" due to warm water conditions they should NOT be stocked. These waters should be managed for fish that can and will survive along with having the ability to sustain themselves. Bass, Perch, and Sunfish should be stocked rather than wasting tax payer money on planting trout when they will not survive.
The Board of Flathead Wildlife opposes this proposal. Flathead Wildlife has assisted the Hedges School Hooked on Fishing classes stock this pond and has seen the pride the students take in the program. Leave the pond under Family Fishing with harvest reserved just for kids age 14 and younger.
Support
Let people fish and catch them.....
Stock a fish species capable of surviving as long as it doesnt effect other ecosystems
Why not plant warm water species instead. Following the current science with global warming it's going to get increasingly expensive for the FWP to try and buck Mother Nature.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 6) East Fork Reservoir

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 6 Response	61 (37%)	12 (7.3%)	92 (55.7%)	165

No Opinion
You guys want to Gill net and kill fish in one lake and promote fish in another...WHY ..? let nature take its course..Leave it alone...Let people fish and catch what they catch...Piss on the bullshit trout..
Oppose
Let people keep the same number of trout. They buy the fishing license they deserve to eat the fish. Take care of your bull trout problem by letting people keep them also.
Support

No written comments.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 7) Flathead River Gear Restriction

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 7 Response	34 (20.6%)	50 (30.3%)	81 (49.1%)	165

No opinion
I worry a little that single hook will indicate fishing with live bait, in which case the survival rate of a fish that eats live bait isn't great either
Oppose
All the hard work in managing a world class bass fishery and you want to take it away. NO!!!
I have not seen any real science to back this up. I have researched. It appears that certain fly fishing groups are the only support for this. This will force people who don't fly fish to spend more money to try and trade other lures to single hooks.
I support all but the intentional fishing for pike closure. We do not need to be protecting pike.
I would be willing to bet that the majority of cutthroat are already caught on single hooks, specifically flies. While I support changes that could help prevent injury to the fish, this seems out of touch with how these fish are currently being caught. I think the problem is clearly more related to the number of fisherman, rather than the actual tackle being used. Further, I think that changes to the pike regulations are absolutely terrible. The rationale of protecting bulltrout doesn't seem to make any sense. You are substituting the very small chance a bulltrout might be caught, by greatly protecting one of the most predatory species in the waters during their spawning period.
Maybe you should look at limiting fishing pressure. Caps on the number of Guides, and guides days on water. As for the pike closure, I'm all for management for larger pike, but closing the season for 5 months is pretty ridiculous. There should still be fishing and harvest for smaller pike.
My comment is specific to the treble hook restrictions. I do support this restriction, but I would like to see more information about the hook related injuries to Cutthroat trout or the mortality rate due to treble hooks, although I do understand that would be near impossible to determine mortality rates. But I would like to consider allowing minors to continue using treble hooks, which would reduce the amount of treble hooks being used, but still allow our youth better opportunities for angling.
The Board of Flathead Wildlife, Inc. opposes the single hook restriction. Data indicates the fish populations are stable and science does not show that hooking scars reduce fish survival. Scientific studies do not show a single hook restriction will reduce hooking scars. There are some real questions about the proposal in terms of what sections are omitted, how many fishermen use treble hooks, how much this proposal would reduce hook scarring for the problems it would cause for anglers. There needs to be a lot more work on this proposal and a lot of education before a regulation like this is adopted.

<p>The same, or even better results could be achieved by implementing barbless restrictions. Further, the rationale states "expected to reduce handling stress and hook-related injury", which has no scientific basis. So if this is implemented I fully expect a follow up study to see if indeed this poorly thought out regulation is working, otherwise FWP is simply singling out a class of angler (spin fisherman) in deference to their romantically preferred fly fisherman.</p>
<p>The whole fucking system needs to be barbless those fish swim freely though all systems and reserve equal pressure throughout the summer months</p>
<p>There is no documented proof that survival rates are any better or worse whether single hooks or treble hooks are used. Single hooks can penetrate deeper doing more deep tissue damage than treble hooks.</p>
<p>Too restrictive for overall proposed river sections and the winter regulations are not feasible. May need to break out some of the proposals to be reviewed independently.</p>
<p>Support</p>
<p>Due to the pressures on the river, single barbless hooks should be a requirement for the ENTIRE river, not just to Teakettle.</p>
<p>Entire Flathead should be barbless not just to Teakettle</p>
<p>Every thing sounds good except limiting the times to fish for pike.</p>
<p>gear restriction needed not only on Flathead but in many waters in other districts where I have observed a good number of trout in small streams feeding with restrictions because of serious deformation from treble hooks.</p>
<p>Good idea.</p>
<p>I live in Columbia Falls, and love fishing the North and Middle Forks of the Flathead. I've caught and released many Cutthroats. Over the last 20 years I have watched the increase in fishing pressure, and general recreational use of these rivers with some concern. A lot of folks are not so good at releasing fish, and a treble hook can be a real challenge. I strongly support the proposal to limit lures to a single hook per attachment point. This could give these fish a much better chance at survival.</p>
<p>I support a barb-less, single point hook regulation.</p>
<p>I support these proposals to restrict terminal gear for the mainstem Flathead and tributaries, including the main three forks above Teakettle Fishing Access Site. Under these changes, anglers would be restricted to single pointed hooks, no treble or double pointed hooks. We know that angling pressure on native fish in these waters has drastically increased in recent years and that increase is forecast to continue. Our members have seen and heard from many local anglers and guides alarming and often fatal mouth damage (ripped mandibles, missing mouth parts) due to hooking-caused wounds, as well as reports of dead fish, likely due to poor playing and releasing techniques, dangerous terminal tackle and increasing angling pressure. Treble hooks play a large part in these wounds. We support efforts to eliminate the use of multi-pointed hooks in the Flathead River system. We believe that removing multi-point hooks from use on populations of threatened native fish will result increased survival and in better overall survival of the population. Again, I support these proposals.</p>
<p>I support this but I think this is a user issue more than an equipment one.</p>
<p>I support this change. The only issue is that the rule is only to teakettle bridge. It should be the whole system Down to old steel bridge or the the confluence of the Stillwater. The fish you are trying to protect are the same fish that migrate through the lower river as well. This regulation wouldn't help anything. In fact it would put more pressure on the lower river with gear and</p>

worm dunkers who kill more cutthroat than anyone else. How can you have a catch and release fishery that still allows people to use live bait. It's the stupidest thing that you guys have allowed. There are 10 outfitters on 18 miles of lower river. 40 guides make there living down there. If you allow the gear to continue it will destroy the lower river. Every year it becomes harder to give people a good experience on the river. Jet boats and jet skis are a huge part of the problem as well. Your biologist should know that the fish up river always spend some time in the lower river system. I've been on this river for more than 30 years and I don't need a degree to know that this rule doesn't help our fish. Please change it to the whole river system.
I think in direct correlation to this: a limit to the amount of anglers on these rivers would ultimately be the best for river and all fish species.
It absolutely needs to go to the old steel bridge or lower. Old steel at minimum
Make it barbless hooks only
Spawning pike need to be protected
state wide ban on treble hooks and sales
This is very important and needs to happen ASAP to minimize by catch as fishing pressure increases!
This regulation is long overdue! There should also be a bait ban if you're over 12 years old. Also, keep the motor boats below Old Steel Bridge.
This will not work unless it's the entire river system. Your biologist has no clue what he is doing. I'm on the river literally every day. Where do you think the upper river fish come from or winter. They migrate and move up and down the system every year. The river has finally become a decent fishery. Please don't ruin it again like you did to our Kokanee salmon. Think about it
Treble hooks kill our native fish. There is no justification for allowing treble hooks in waters where the primary target is threatened native fish.
Why wouldn't you extend the single barbless past Teakettle? It's the same water way and the fish should be protected as such. Confusing for the public and absurd.
Other
well with huge impact of are population growing in the area and all the outsiders not knowing how to handle certain fish i can see the problem, the bull trout are fine in the river and in flathead lake, someone should ask the guides to write down and document what they see and catch. more eyes on the water than a couple of biologist for a limited time.

(Proposal 8) Flathead River Sloughs

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 8 Response	40 (25.5%)	43 (27.4%)	74 (47.1%)	157

No opinion
Do not care about trout
Oppose

Again targeting one fishing opportunity at the expense of another is politics, not biology. Let people decide what fish to fish for, instead of steering that decision by declaring war on species. What data are you using to ascertain that warm water fisheries are decimating trout fisheries?
bass limit should be 5 with 1 over 22
I am in support of the change in the bass regulations however I would prefer NOT allowing 1 fish over 22" during the spawning closure. In regard to the Rainbow Trout regulation I feel that any waters that contain West Slope Cutthroat that Rainbow Trout should not be planted and that they should be a mandatory catch and kill due to hybridization and destroying the the genetics of Native West Slope Cutthroat Trout.
Leave our bass alone!
Oppose the bass changes and would like to see regulations established for the Black Crappie.
Seems OK only because these sloughs tend to be primarily largemouth. Don't like smallmouth limits.
The war on Largemouth continues. I assume "no bait restrictions" means I can use live minnows and live sculpin. Bait usually means a lot of deep hooked fish.
Support
No written comments.
Other
the slough freeze out and get to over fished the way it is, go down there and talk to the people that are shore fishing or putting in there ding they don't even have licenses or know what the difference is between fish species

(Proposal 9) Middle Fork Flathead River Gear Restriction

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 9 Response	35 (22%)	37 (23.3%)	87 (54.7%)	159

No opinion
Do not care about trout
Oppose
As stated above I have not seen any accurate reports to prove this. Plus it limits other anglers on how to fish with out having to change hooks.
I dont think it's a hook problem, it's the increase in the number of people. People have been encouraged to catch and release and I think there is the problem...FWP's needs to get better at educating the anglers.
if you truly want to protect native cutthroat you need to close all fishing
Makes little more sense in this section to propose some type of gear restrictions but still should allow 2 flies single hooks or go to artificial only or catch and release only section.
Same comments as for the Main Flathead River
See my earlier comment on treble hooks.

The same, or even better results could be achieved by implementing barbless restrictions. Further, the rationale states "expected to reduce handling stress and hook-related injury", which has no scientific basis. So if this is implemented I fully expect a follow up study to see if indeed this poorly thought out regulation is working, otherwise FWP is simply singling out a class of angler (spin fisherman) in deference to their romantically preferred fly fisherman.
There is no scientific proof that a single hook will cause any lower mortality rate than treble hooks. Single hooks are known to penetrate deeper causing more deep tissue damage than treble hooks.
Support
Add no barb hooks so release is easier on the fish
Again, gear restriction not only overdue but applicable to many trout waters in other districts.
Again, single barbless hooks should be the requirement for the whole river
Barbless Artificial lures only
I support a barb-less, single point hook regulation.
Keep the Flathead single barbless period. These new regs will still result in fish trauma. Spin cast anglers handle fish with no regard this is why treble hooks cause trauma.
Support single-point hooks for native fish.
treble hooks need be banned throughout the Flathead River System the ENTIRE system
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 10) North Fork Flathead River Gear Restriction

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 10 Response	32 (20.5%)	35 (22.4%)	89 (57.1%)	156

No opinion
Do not care about trout
Oppose
Same comments as above
Same comments as for the main Flathead River Proposal
Same comments as Middle Fork Section
See my earlier comment on treble hooks
The same, or even better results could be achieved by implementing barbless restrictions. Further, the rationale states "expected to reduce handling stress and hook-related injury", which has no scientific basis. So if this is implemented I fully expect a follow up study to see if indeed this poorly thought out regulation is working, otherwise FWP is simply singling out a class of angler (spin fisherman) in deference to their romantically preferred fly fisherman.
There is no scientific proof that a single hook will cause any lower mortality rate than treble hooks. Single hooks are known to penetrate deeper causing more deep tissue damage than treble hooks.

Support
add no barb hooks restriction so it is easier on the fish on release
Barbless hooks only Eventually artificial lures no bait
Haven't been paying attention to the trout waters but there will be the same misidentification and enforcement issues with trout as with bass.
I support a barb-less, single point hook regulation.
Keep the whole river system single barbless, period.
see previous
Treble hooks kill native fish. Single-point hooks catch just as many fish and don't kill as easily.
Very important!
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 11) Racetrack Pond

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 11 Response	58 (37.7%)	11 (7.1%)	85 (55.2%)	154

No opinion
If you are going to release the fish maybe a single hooks rule would be helpful.
Oppose
Fishing should be for anglers only 14 and under. Catch and release is hard on fish especially in a small ponds. Adults can go elsewhere
I'm not in favor of tank fishing. I believe it gives poor representation of what fishing is about and is a bad use of tax dollars. Fishing is all about the total outdoor experience not pulling fish out of a tank or stocked pond.
Support
Most of we "catch and release wild fish" fly fishermen began as youngsters using worms. I support exceptions to engage more young people in fishing.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 12) River's Edge Pond

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 12 Response	56 (36.1%)	10 (6.4%)	89 (57.4%)	155

No opinion

single hook
Oppose
I'm not in favor of tank fishing. I believe it gives poor representation of what fishing is about and is a bad use of tax dollars. Fishing is all about the total outdoor experience not pulling fish out of a tank or stocked pond.
no take. catch and release only
Support
No written comments.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 13) Seeley Lake Bass Spearing

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 13 Response	28 (17.9%)	61 (39.1%)	67 (42.9%)	156

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Against spearing smallmouth. They are my third favorite freshwater fish
Bass are well established in this lake and should be managed properly with a 5 bass daily limit and a spawning closure.
Bass should be managed as a self sustainable species rather than be suppressed.
Don't like the idea of spearing bass at all.
I am totally against the spearing or snagging of any game fish in Montana. LM Bass were legally stocked into Seeley Lake and other lakes in the Seeley chain with public tax dollars and they warrant protection. Seeley is or at least was just as good of bass fishery as Placid or Upsata. I think the statement of the LM Bass population being marginal in Seeley lake is an ignorant and misinformed statement that is not true. It may be true now due to management policy but Seeley used to be an excellent LM Bass fishery.
Just because fishery is marginal doesn't mean Largemouth Bass can be speared.
Leave our bass alone. I'm sure your all knowing staff will disregard all of us who purchase licenses but we will fight this.
Leave those poor compatible Largemouth alone.
No spearing of Bass
Not even smart, it isn't really a viable strategy. How do you prove a speared bass came from just Seeley? Big enforcement issue for sure.
People need to learn more on how to distinguish bass. Why waste 30 years in bass management for that
Seeley Lake is a great lake for Large Mouth Bass. I support changing regs to specify: spearing Small Mouth Bass only. Seeley Lake should be managed for Large Mouth bass as it was before.

Seeley lake is a lake I like to bass fish. Living in Missoula there isn't much opportunities to bass fish and I feel like spearing for bass will really put a dent of the bass fishing there. It is already a tough lake as is to bass fish and it'll make this even tougher.
They are already there, I would prefer to catch both bass and pike.
What a hairbrained idea. Again you have taken upon yourselves to determine future fishing opportunities by putting one species against another. Your track record of micro managing fisheries in region one is abysmal, and the only viable fisheries we have are ones you didn't have anything to do with.
What are you talking bass have been in this lake for a 100 years and fish and game put them there. What are they hurting. Please explain to me what are they hurting .
Yeah, largemouth fishing was marginal if that. I'm sure spearing and no limits at all will eliminate them, but will be unlikely to have much impact on smallmouth. Spearing should help with pike, but I don't expect pike nor smallmouth to ever be out of these fisheries again. Maybe manage the fishery for as it is rather than what it was.
Support
Go all the way and make catch and kill for all smallmouth caught
strongly support this.
Yes! More spearfishing needs to be allowed for more fish other than non-game fish. Non-game fish are small and not worth going out to spear for. Allow spearing for more types of fish and not just northern pike!
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 14) Silver's Lagoon

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 14 Response	63 (40.6%)	8 (5.2%)	84 (54.2%)	155

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
I'm not in favor of tank fishing. I believe it gives poor representation of what fishing is about and is and a bad use of tax dollars. Fishing is all about the total outdoor experience not pulling fish out of a tank or stocked pond.
There are already more adults than kids fishing this pond every time we go.
Support
No written comments.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 15) South Fork Flathead River Gear Restriction

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 15 Response	40 (25.8%)	35 (22.6%)	80 (51.6%)	155

No opinion
Do not care about trout
Oppose
close fishing to protect if thats what you want to do is protect the trout
I feel the gear restrictions on the North and Middle forks previously mentioned make a lot of sense considering the public access impact. I however oppose the South Fork restriction through the length of the Bob Marshall. Only horseback or very long foot trips can access anyone to this water. I feel "not everyone" is a fly fishing specific fisherman. In the remote areas, families and kids camp, hunt, etc and rely on a fish for dinner. The traditional Mepps spinner as example is critical for a quick dinner. These examples are not the special interest folks dedicated to their own personal passion. I feel the logical restrictions on the North and Middle forks are good because of over recreational access. The South Fork should remain regulated, but not restricting the basic Trout lures.
Same comments as above
Same comments as for the main Flathead River. If the Commission does want to try this proposal, it would make more sense to try it on the South Fork basis on an experimental basis rather than all the forks.
See my earlier comment about treble hooks
Shouldn't lump all fish monitoring data together when requesting regulation changes on specific forks but instead provide the actual sectional data for each fork would help public make better informed decisions. Again don't agree with gear restrictions.
The same, or even better results could be achieved by implementing barbless restrictions. Further, the rationale states "expected to reduce handling stress and hook-related injury", which has no scientific basis. So if this is implemented I fully expect a follow up study to see if indeed this poorly thought out regulation is working, otherwise FWP is simply singling out a class of angler (spin fisherman) in deference to their romantically preferred fly fisherman.
There is no scientific proof that a single hook will cause any lower mortality rate than treble hooks. Single hooks are known to penetrate deeper causing more deep tissue damage than treble hooks.
Support
Go barbless
I support a barb-less, single point hook regulation.
Please clarify double hooks? one lure/fly with 2 hooks or single hook lure/fly then attaching another single fly as a "hopper dropper set up" I support the later
Reduce multiple-hook lures to one hook only. Prevents fish side damage.
South fork needs to be single hook barbless and permit only in the wilderness. Outfitters are stacking too many groups, witnessed drone use etc....
Support single-point hooks throughout the flathead. Also do away with bait and barbed hooks.

There really needs to be a progress bar when going through all of these.
Very important.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 16) St. Regis Community Park Pond

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 16 Response	60 (39%)	7 (4.5%)	87 (56.5%)	154

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
I'm not in favor of tank fishing. I believe it gives poor representation of what fishing is about and is and a bad use of tax dollars. Fishing is all about the total outdoor experience not pulling fish out of a tank or stocked pond.
Support
No written comments.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 17) Swan River

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 17 Response	44 (28.4%)	23 (14.8%)	88 (56.8%)	155

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Could an attempt to plant more west slope cutthroat be an option in areas where numbers are declining
Do not want the walleye killed
I catch walleye to eat. You are making that difficult
I need a reason for the severe inconvenience to anglers should they catch a walleye and why they should lose the meat. I understand knowing areas can help FWP mitigate the species, but why not release the meat to the angler after retrieving data from the fish?
I opposed the killing of the walleye
I would prefer walleye over any type of trout in this water way. Way over protecting the bull trout and cutthroat again..

Telling someone they have to kill a fish is assinne. Where is your data coming from that supports with concrete evidence that walleye are going to decimate or even harm a trout fishery?
The process you have to go through after catching a walleye is excessive.
Support
I support native trout conservation.
Rainbow Trout are hugely responsible for the decline of the West Slope Cutthroat. The Yellow Bay Research Center states the the number 1 reason for the decline of West Slope Cutthroat is hybridization with Rainbow Trout.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 18) Thompson River

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 18 Response	48 (31%)	14 (9%)	93 (60%)	155

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Again can more fish be planted this is a popular recreation area
If you fish year round it affect's the other trout. December 1 to third Saturday in may is good for the fish. Give them a break.
Rainbow trout are out competing Cutthroat trout, target both Brown and Rainbow to protect the Cutthroat.
Rainbow Trout should be on the same list as Brown Trout as they are hugely responsible for the decline of the West Slope Cutthroat. The Yellow Bay Research Center states the the number 1 reason for the decline of West Slope Cutthroat is hybridization with Rainbow Trout.
Support
Allow use of Aquadic insects the first week of season on Thompson River. Allow three Rainbow and three Brown Trout for the first week.
I strongly support this regulation. I have noticed a dramatic change in the number of brown trout over the past 10 years. They are basically the only fish I catch there anymore
I totally support this, make this happen!!!
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 19) Warm Spring Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Gravel Pit Pond

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 19 Response	72 (48.3%)	10 (6.7%)	67 (45%)	149

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
I'm not in favor of tank fishing. I believe it gives poor representation of what fishing is about and is and a bad use of tax dollars. Fishing is all about the total outdoor experience not pulling fish out of a tank or stocked pond.
Support
"Adults with disabilities" is the preferred nomenclature.
Other
No written comments.

Central Fishing District

(Proposal 20) Central Fishing District Standard Channel Catfish Regulation

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 20 Response	37 (39.4%)	6 (6.4%)	51 (54.2%)	94

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
No written comments.
Support
any improvement in the cat fishing is welcome
Catfish will do great with a lower limit and maybe a 1 over whatever size to help manage a trophy fishery
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 21) Central Fishing District Standard Sauger Regulation

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 21 Response	21 (21.2%)	10 (10.1%)	68 (68.7%)	99

No opinion

No written comments.
Oppose
Believe it or not, TROUT, wildlife and parks, sauger, walleye and smallmouth are prized sport-and food-fish. There is no need to attempt to eradicate them.
If you are going to manage for favoring native species, then it should be for all native species, including sauger.
My experience since the sauger limits were increased has been a reduction in the number of sauger I have been able to catch in the Missouri River below Fort Benton. I don't believe increasing the limits elsewhere will not result in a further decline of a potentially species of concern
Support
/Sauger and walleye are both caught in the same waters but the sauger is not caught by fisherman as often as the walleye.
Simplify please
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 22) Ackley Lake Tiger Muskie

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 22 Response	28 (28.9%)	14 (14.4%)	55 (56.7%)	97

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
I think cutting that in half is more reasonable 1 daily and 2 in possession
I would support keeping the regulation as is. With the tiger musky population die off on willow creek reservoir there is not many options to fish for tiger musky in the state. Rainbow trout on the other hand are stocked in most reservoirs across the state.
Not interested in trout
The trout fishing in 2016 when tiger muskie were stocked was not as good as 15 years ago. Tiger muskie are not to blame in the decline of trout. Of course they eat a trout here and there but they are not focusing on them. Tiger muskie are a trophy fish not a food fish and should be treated as a trophy
This is a rare opportunity in Montana to catch a trophy fish. I personally believe more lakes should have a size limit on fish in the lake. I Have watched many fisherman keep there limit on trout on this lake and many others in Montana. Maybe we should have a few more toothy fisheries in Montana where you can't keep so many fish. people would catch more and bigger fish. Maybe look at lowering the trout limit and only one trout over 20 inches to limit the impact of trout being taken out. These tiger muskie will die off and come next year they will be bigger and people will eventually catch ones over 40 inches they need time. when they do that will boost the trout along with the lower limits.

Tiger Muskie should only be kept if over 48". Allowing the tigers to grow to full maturity would help keep sucker populations down and trophy size Muskie up.
Support
Tiger muskies have done what they were planted to do. Raise the limit..
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 23) Big Hole River

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 23 Response	32 (33%)	3 (3.1%)	62 (63.9%)	97

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Close the River to all fishing from Oct 1 (protect brown trout spawning) thru the third Saturday in May. The outfitters and guides are overfishing the River. Give the fish a break.
Support
I like clarifying regulations, but still believe that the 3rd Saturday in May opener for the central district should be reinstated.
Other

(Proposal 24) Big Spring Creek

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 24 Response	28 (30.1%)	9 (9.7%)	56 (60.2%)	93

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Before lifting the catch-and-release regulation, FWP needs to provide data and rationale to show that the existing high-quality trout fishery will not be degraded by allowing standard harvest limits. Big Spring Creek provides a unique fishing opportunity in central Montana that should not be compromised.
catch and release only

I would support a limited harvest such as two or three fish with one of fifteen inches or more as a limited harvest is reasonable in most waters. Five wild fish is excessive in this heavily used stream and can mean five mature fish including one large specimen. Mature fish do not re-appear like raindrops. Five fish trout limits here and especially in smaller streams allow one family to remove a large number of perhaps four to eight year old fish and represents an outdated total concession to those who kill wild trout although stocked trout exist in convenient nearby waters. Many Montana and out of State fishermen used to fish this stream and brought money to local businesses. Especially with stream damage and reduced populations a five fish limit is excessive and is outdated for wild fish in streams.

Support

I strongly agree with removing the catch and release regulation for all trout.

Other

No written comments.

(Proposal 25) Bighorn Lake and Afterbay Reservoir

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 25 Response	42 (44.7%)	3 (3.2%)	49 (52.1%)	94

No written comments received.

(Proposal 26) Boulder River (near Big Timber)

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 26 Response	38 (40.9%)	9 (9.7%)	46 (49.5%)	93

No opinion

No written comments.

Oppose

Providing more harvest opportunities is not worth the risk to the cutthroat population. Why experiment with the Boulder River fishery by encouraging additional harvest? Experience shows that cutthroat trout fisheries can be quickly degraded by increased harvest.

Support

I am strongly in favor of changing this regulation to the standard Central Fishing District regulation of 5 trout, one over 18 inches. The reality is that very few anglers harvest trout anymore. This new regulation will not destroy the trout population as some of the catch and release crowd would have us believe. Harvest of all age and size class of trout is a necessary part of managing the population. Anglers who choose to catch and release trout will still be allowed to do so. Another benefit of this change is it simplifies the regulations for those of us who fish (and harvest from) several different rivers in the Central Fishing District.

It is time to simplify the regulations and the reality is that very few anglers actually keep fish. The river can easily support the standard Region 5 regulation. With limited biomass available in the river, harvest of some larger fish will probably benefit the river's population and larger fish size overall will result.

Other

No written comments.

(Proposal 27) Canyon Ferry Northern Pike Spearing

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 27 Response	8 (8.6%)	18 (19.3%)	67 (72%)	93

No opinion

No written comments.

Oppose

6 lines is way to many, three lines would be sufficient. How about 10 Walleye per day under 16 inches, 5 Walleye per day 16 to 24 inches and only 1 over 24 inches.

Bring the walleye limit down to 5 per day! Limits on northern pike.

catch and release for trout only, continue watercraft inspections

I support the dismissal of the ais cleaning station as no mussels have been found. However I do not support a 20 fish limit on walleye

Lower walleye limit to 5 like the rest of Missouri River impoundments and lower perch to 5

Only oppose the cessation of the watercraft inspection station

Seeing that the mussels have not been found, keep up your inspection of boats and it might stay that way. We have a lot of Wisconsin and Minnesota boats that fish the lake and they hate your inspections.

Set walleye limits to 10 per day and the same for possession limit. This limit should be standardized though out the state to limit confusion.

The 20 walleye a day 40 in possession is terrible. Why isn't it 5 a day and 10 in possession like most of the rest of the state? Put a minimum size of 16 inches with 1 over 22 inches and you'll have a better fish size in a few years than the 13 inchers that are in there now. The other lakes in Montana with a 5/10 limit are all better fisheries than canyon ferry, hauser, and holter.

There have been multiple 30lb+ pike caught out of Canyon Ferry. It is a place to catch a potential record pike. Pike should be managed there to as help manage giant pike but also allow harvest. An idea is a limit in them but also allow 1 over a certain size to help protect giant pike.

Walleye 5 and 1 over 16

Support

Are there enough Pike in Canyon Ferry to warrant spearing?

Favor darkhouse spearing for northern pike through the ice. The hazard of ice blocks being left on ice surface and causing a possible safety hazard can be prevented by pushing said blocks beneath ice surface. Another concern is open holes after darkhouse is removed, from my 50 years of spearing experience I always insert several larger branches into said hole which provide warning. Perhaps both of these solutions could be added to license regulations.
I support the removal of boat inspections from C.F.
I support the spearing but the 20 daily limit on walleye is ridiculous. Allowing use of native minnows for live bait would be a great idea.
It would be nice to be able to spear fish around the Helena area it's a very fun sport I think it would draw allot of interest and bring more revenue to the local sporting goods stores
More spearfishing needs to be allowed especially for larger fish other than just northern pike (which is limited on how you do it) and non-game fish
Strongly support both 20 walleye limit and any possible means of increased northern pike harvest.
Yes it is time to remove the requirement for inspection.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 28) Clark Canyon Reservoir Burbot (ling)

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 28 Response	32 (36%)	3 (3.4%)	54 (60.7%)	89

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Allowing 3 burbot over 23" will also allow people to keep 3 trophy burbot over 28". An idea to do is 3 over 23" but allow 1 over 28"
Support
23-inches seems an odd number to land on.
In recent years the majority of Ling that I have seen are below the 23" mark. Under the new proposed regs, these fish would all have to be released. This may lead to people fishing for longer hours trying to find bigger fish, while catching and releasing *more* fish than they would have previously. (logic being that if you catch three fish, you keep three fish and pack it in for the night. Now you may catch more than three fish targeting a minimum sized fish.) My concern stems from the fact that ling are usually caught at greater depth than other fish, and are sensitive to being hauled out from high pressure to low pressure. I worry that releasing smaller fish into surface pressure that were drug up from the higher pressure will increase fish mortality anyway. I would consider adding a requirement for a fish descender device while fishing. It may be more prohibitive to the anglers, but may help the fish population. I fully support the size limitations.
Other

No written comments.

(Proposal 29) East Fork Big Spring Creek

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	(blank)	Grand Total
Count of Prop 29 Response	33 (36.7%)	7 (7.8%)	50 (55.6%)		90

No opinion
I have found trout numbers in this water to normally be very modest, it is not heavily fished, and in my opinion changes will have little impact upon Big Spring Creek.
Oppose
catch and release only
See my comments on Big Spring Creek. There is no data or analysis to show that the quality of the fishery will be maintained if catch-and-release regulations are lifted.
Support
I am strongly in favor of removing the catch and release regulation for all trout.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 30) Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir

Values	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 30 Response	23 (25%)	10 (10.9%)	59 (64.1%)	92

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Seems overly protective. Many water reservoirs used for drinking water allow motorized boating. Additionally, I believe that the Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir is currently inactive in the City of Helena's water system.
should be able to use atvs on ice
Support
I have never fished the reservoir but as a water supply for Helena I do believe that no gasoline or oil items used by used. Permit ice augers...
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 31) Madison River “Hoot Owl” Restriction

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 31 Response	24 (25.3%)	19 (20%)	52 (54.7%)	95

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Fwp currently has developed a great system for implementing hoot owl closures for this and other area rivers upon triggers of temperature. For the 2 years, those triggers have not been met and the fishing has remained open on the lower Madison throughout the entire season. And the fishing has been excellent. I fully support closures when warranted due to temperature increases, however this closure would set a terrible precedent for other rivers being closed to ease the work load of fwp. Please continue to use the system that is in place and let's keep the river open to angling when the temperature is not a factor such as during the last two years!
Hoot owl restrictions are a good thing, but should be implemented by science and water temperatures, not operated by schedule. There could be many years that water temps could be excessive outside these dates. Other years when restrictions are not necessary.
I disagree with this data and strongly oppose a mandatory hoot owl closure. I do support the hoot owl closures when the rivers become too warm, but this should be used on a case by case scenario, not a blanket restriction. On years such as this the river temps never reached a dangerous level and I feel that it fished extremely well. Other years we have restrictions but I wouldn't believe that "nearly every year" has had closures as worded above.
I do not like a "blanket" hoot owl closure based on what if the temperature of the river may become too warm". It is the job of FWP to manage the river based on current conditions, not based on what has happened in previous years. If the variable closure dates are confusing and are being missed by members of the public, maybe FWP should try to do a better job of passing that message along to the public.
Not needed—summer evening fishing is some of the best all year. Fished river for 50 yrs and have done well during these months in the early evening each yr.
The current regulations in place for dealing with warm water conditions are sufficient and the regulations should reflect the willingness of the Department to allow recreation when the water conditions allow. The regulations should not be written for the convenience of Department personnel.
This fishery should be managed, the way others are. Hoot owl restrictions on other rivers occur at variable times, and as an angler, I know to check before I fish. Imposing a permanent restriction will greatly limit recreational opportunities in the evenings during prime fishing season. The river should be monitored like other rivers on Montana and closed or opened as appropriate.

This year no hoot owl was needed because of the rainfall and cooler temperatures. Please leave it like is and impose a hoot owl when necessary. To arbitrarily impose a hoot owl by date and not on weather and river temperatures could close the river to fishing when its not necessary. I live in Bozeman and often fish this river in the evenings and would be upset by this permanent hoot owl. If the river needs to be put on a hoot owl to protect fish, I'm all for that. But to do it by date and not water temperature would be unfair to all the fisherman around Bozeman who fish the Lower often during the summer.

While I support "hoot owl" restrictions when needed, I oppose the automatic imposition of them on a permanent (4-year) basis, whether from July 15-Aug. 15, or the original proposed dates of July 1-Aug. 31. I live in the section affected, and will be prevented from fishing "in my back yard". Part of your argument is that these restrictions are implemented "nearly every year". Well, we now have two years running (2018 & 2019) when they were not. I understand the difficulty in putting the restrictions on, removing them, etc. under current policy. Would it be so difficult for FWP to wait until next July, see what the conditions are, and make a determination of the need at that time? What if you need to implement them prior to July 15th? Are you going to ignore that, or announce the restrictions? What's the difference between that and waiting to see if they are needed year by year? I'm a Life Member of TU, but I disagree completely with their position on this, as they want you to apply "hoot owl" from July 1-Aug. 31 permanently.

Support

Good idea - take the guessing out of the equation. Hoot owl restrictions will be on from July 15 through August 15 period.

I also support FWP's previous proposal to implement mandatory hoot owl for a longer section of the Madison and for a longer period of time based on historic temperature/flow data and the frequency of hoot owl closures.

With modification. Under this change, the Department is proposing a permanent "Hoot Owl" restriction for the Lower Madison River from Warm Springs Day Use Area to the confluence of the Jefferson River from July 15 to August 15. Fishing would be prohibited from 2 p.m. to midnight during those thirty days. I strongly support protecting trout during these acutely warm water conditions – the likes of which have become the norm for this stretch of river in recent years. We are concerned about the lack of the consistent use of this important tool across the state as we are seeing increasingly warmer waters that are negatively impacting native fish, often because of real or perceived challenges in the short notice of public education and enforcement challenges. We believe that moving to permanent Hoot Owl restrictions will actually make the regulations more predictable and user friendly for anglers. My only suggestion is to go back to the original proposal that was offered during the scoping period of the Hoot Owl restrictions being in place on the entire stretch below Ennis Dam for the entire months of July and August. 72.5% of survey respondents supported that proposal, and it is certainly supported by the scientific data on stream temperatures on this stretch in recent years. The water temperatures are predictably exceeding healthy thresholds every year, and the original proposed regulation change would be more protective of the fishery resource in this stretch. We hope that you revert to it before you finalize the regulations.

Other

No written comments.

(Proposal 32) Toston Dam Northern Pike

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 32 Response	12 (12.9%)	6 (6.4%)	75 (80.6%)	93

No Opinion
Again, enough of a population to warrant?
Oppose
Put limits on the northern pike.
Support
Fully support spearing. It needs to be allowed for more than just northern pike and non-game fish as non-game fish are to small to spear
Spearing the northern will limit their numbers in the lakes Canyon Ferry, Hauser and Holter.
We need to keep the pike numbers to minimum to protect the other species in the Upper Missouri river system.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 33) Missouri River below Holter Dam

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 33 Response	6 (6.3%)	46 (48.4%)	43 (45.3%)	95

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
20 walleye daily is still alot. This regulation would still allow great amount of of suppression on walleye just as the no limit rule did.
5 a day 10 in possession is better. Who needs 20 fish a day.
5 limit
A 20 fish daily limit on walleye is essentially the same as “no limit”. The limit on walleye should be a more realistic limit that follows the standard state wide regulation. According to MTFWP study “An evaluation of walleye in the Missouri River between holter dam and great falls Montana” shows walleye do not have a negative impact on trout and I feel we should stop trying to suppress the walleye.
As a hard core trout fisherman, I would rather see the no limit on walleye maintained from Holter Dam to Cascade Bridge. I am in favor of no limit on northern pike, but would like to see mandatory kill on any northern pike caught by anglers.
Bring the limit of walleye down to 5 per day. Put limits on the northern pike.
Get the walleye out of the Holter Dam area. It is a non native species.

I agree with pike limit. I do not agree with walleye limit! needs to be 10.
I agree with the assessment of the managing the pike in this stretch of river. However, I vehemently oppose the limit numbers for walleye in this stretch of river. Those numbers suggest suppression and that is not necessary or proven. Since there are no current population numbers of walleye in the river and there is no proof or information that the trout fishery has been impacted by walleye then suppression numbers are not necessary. The limit for walleye should be on par with other fisheries in the central district. 5 daily and 10 in possession. At the very most, the limit should mirror Holter Lake so that no poaching of walleye can occur in the lake. The 20 daily and 40 in possession is not any better than the current no limit on the river. Putting random limit numbers out there is nothing but placating the walleye groups that voice their displeasure with the bogus no limit that was politically motivated in 2012. We have called for a limit to be placed, but this is ridiculous and only serves as a slap in the face.....
I am in support of having sustained populations of walleye and northern Pike in these waters. I cannot support liberal limits with the intention of limiting the populations. Rainbow trout are a non-native species to Montana.
I feel the walleye limit should match the rest of the district at 5 daily and 10 possession.
I fully believe that this stretch of the Missouri River below Holter Dam to Cascade should be managed first and foremost as a wild, coldwater trout fishery. We cannot support these proposed changes to the regulations that would compromise the integrity of this world-class trout fishery, and we have long advocated for the current regulation of an unlimited harvest on non-native predatory species like Walleye. The Department should prioritize the management of wild, coldwater trout in this stretch of the Missouri, as they have done, and they should continue to robustly monitor the effect that non-native species, like Walleye, have on the populations of wild Rainbow and Brown Trout in the Missouri.
I respectfully request further consideration be given to establishing a reasonable limit for walleye below Holter Dam as follows: The current proposed change to a 20 fish limit is for all practical purposes not much different than the current no fish limit. It is an abuse of the resource and is not justified or necessary from any scientific or biological data. The following is taken from the FWP Report dated January 2012 An Evaluation of Walleye in the Missouri River between Holter Dam and Great Falls, Montana PPL-Montana MOTAC projects 771-09, 771-10, 759-11, 771-11 and Fisheries Division Federal Aid Job Progress Report Federal Aid Project Number F-113-R9, R10, R11, R12 Montana Statewide Fisheries Management Pages 34-35 include the following: Discussion It is the perception of some publics that walleye have a negative effect on trout in the Missouri River below Holter Dam. This study showed, despite a presence of walleye in this section of river from the late 1960's through 2011, and at the present level of walleye in the river, there is no measurable evidence of negative impacts to trout. Up until March 1, 2011, there were no special angler harvest regulations for this area and the standard limit of 5 walleye daily and 10 in possession applied. In 2011, the MFWP Commission instituted unlimited walleye harvest from Holter Dam to Cascade and a limit of 20 daily and 40 in possession from Cascade to Black Eagle Dam. During the report period, we expended considerable effort sampling for walleye with gill nets, trammel nets, hoop nets, electrofishing and angling at numerous sites in an attempt to discover concentrations of walleye for tagging and diet studies. With the exception of the Craig and Cascade trout estimate sections, and the Holter, Cascade and Great Falls angling sites referenced above, the only other locations where adult walleye were sampled included the

lower 0.5 mile of the Smith River using hoop nets and immediately upstream of the Cascade bridge by trammel netting. The low capture success we observed throughout this study supports the evidence of low walleye population density and localized behavior. The closing paragraph of the above study concludes with the following: “for much of the past 21 years, there is no evidence of declining trout numbers.” So bottom line per the above FWP report, contrary to what some people claim, there is no scientific or biological data to justify the “no limit” or even a liberal “20 fish limit”. Walleyes and trout had successfully co-existed in the Missouri River to Great Falls for decades with the standard 5 fish daily limit. We have and have had a terrific trout fishery and at times nearly a world class walleye fishery in the lower river, which we no longer have with the limits having been removed to suppress the walleye numbers by the FWP Commission several years ago. All that has been accomplished was to reduce the quality of the walleye fishing in the lower river and further limit opportunities for anglers to enjoy what we once had...including anglers who once could have fished from shore and caught trophy walleye. Trout Unlimited Chapters in Helena and Wolf Creek have put forth false information in “call to action” messages to their members, of walleye being “illegally introduced” ignoring the facts that walleyes were reported being stocked in the Missouri River from Richland and Roosevelt to Broadwater counties as far back as 1933 and 1934. Also they were stocked in Lake Helena in 1951, and stocked in Hauser from 1989 to the late 1990’s. I take no exception to continuing to manage the Missouri River below Holter giving priority to trout and maintaining the quality and numbers of trout that is there.....but there is absolutely no data that suggests the walleye numbers need to be suppressed to do so. There is decades of history of increases in walleye numbers in high water flushing years. But subsequently those numbers have dropped as it appears those fish flush through the system. In the event of another high water flushing year with any significant increase in walleye, the FWP Commission could implement a temporary emergency rule to remove limits, but frankly I doubt it would ever be necessary. I think it is important to realize there is a lower section of the Missouri River below Holter that historically has provided recreational fishing opportunities for walleye anglers to the point it had been the best walleye fishing I had ever experienced. Why do we have to ruin this opportunity when it hasn’t done nothing for the Upper river trout fishery? I believe history supports the 5 fish daily walleye limit below Holter. It worked for decades. At the absolute very least the limits should be no more than the limits on Holter...because as is, the limits on Holter are unenforceable because people who have been observed filleting fish at Holter...obviously over the Holter limit simply respond...we caught all these below the Dam, and not a dammed thing can be done about it.

I support the no limit on pike but oppose the limit on walleye. I believe that should remain no limit.

I think the theory of northern pike washing down is pretty far fetched. In great falls the Missouri river is connected to the sun river. The sun river has had a healthy population of northern pike in the river my entire life. There is nothing stopping northern pike from traveling from the sun river up the Missouri to below holter dam. I know from reading information that you have tagged walleye in the rivers traveling 80 miles in very little time. Northern pike have lived in this area successfully without affecting the fishery for years.

I would support a 5 fish limit of walleye. The walleye in the river have shown little to no effect on the trout population over the years. The high limit looks to make certain groups such as TU happy.

Increase trout limits and lower walleye limits. The trout in this section of river are in poor condition and the population needs to be thinned.
Keep the walleye at no limit. Allow pike harvesting but put in place a high number so they also aren't being completely decimated
Keep the walleye limit the same as statewide regulations. You have no evidence that their presence has harmed the trout population
Keeping the "no limit" regulation on walleye sends a strong message about illegal introductions and emphasizes the blue ribbon trout fishery in this part of the Missouri River.
Lower limit on walleye
Lower limit to 5 daily 10 possession on walleye. Not proven degradation of natural trout population
No limit on walleye should remain the regulation below Holter dam as it is and should be managed solely as a wild trout fishery.
No need to kill all walleye. Limit is too high.
The limit on walleye should be lowered to 10 daily and 10 for possession limit. There is no justification, based on your own studies, to support such liberal limits. Additionally, the premise for these changes is to clear up confusion in the regulations therefor limits for walleye should be consistent for all waters.
The limit should be the standard limit for the central district
The responsible limit for walleye should be reduced to 10 a day. Possession should also be 10., Trout Unlimited wants a fish that bring people to the Missouri so that their trout fishing guides can make a killing. No one uses a guide to fish the walleye.
The walleye limit is way to high. It should be five daily and 10 in possession. There is no data to support the high limit of walleye
The walleye limit should be 5 daily 10 in possession. 20 is way to many to maintain a population.
This is still too liberal of a limit for Walleye. As the FWP published study shows, the walleye population has no overall affect on trout numbers. The walleye limit should be reduced to 5 like other water bodies around the state.
This should be lessened to the standard central district limits. While this is a step in the right direction, the "call to arms" from trout unlimited is totally ridiculous. The regulation on this section of river definitely caters to the fly fishing guides and their clients desire to catch trout only. It baffles me as to why people who claim to love fish back themselves into corners about species. There is no reason this river section couldn't be managed to provide opportunities for trout and walleye.
Walleye 5 daily
Walleye and northern pike limits for the section of river from Holter to Black Eagle should match the Central District standard daily and possession limits.
Walleye are a huge draw in the state. Time to admit this.
Walleye are a very desirable species and are Native to Montana via the Milk and Missouri Rivers. Ideally the limit should be 5 but due to the fact that there are so many small ones perhaps a limit of 10 below 16 inches, 5 from 16 to 24 inches and only 1 over 24 inches may be kept.

walleye limit to liberal should be 5 daily what data do you have that shows large numbers of walleye in river ? So large that they need to be suppressed. Is this a do as I say not as I do regulation?
Walleye limits are to high. Reports by Fwp state that trout fishing on this part of river are best ever. It was criminal to have no limit for walleye for this part of river.
Walleye should be managed better, the 20 fish limit is idiotic. A 3 fish limit is more than enough. No game species should be managed at the at the expense of trout which are also non native species. Catering to trout unlimited and guiding should not replace good biology and common sense. The missouri river regardless of where should be managed for both species to thrive not to eliminate one.
Would rather have pike and walleye
Support
20 is still very extreme and seems to be an attempt to destroy any chance of good walleye fishing.
Allow spearfishing for northern as well! It will help keep the population low and creates a fun new style of fishing for people to enjoy
I only supported this change because while the change to walleye regulations is a step in the right direction, it is still very apparent that FWP is being influenced by trout advocates and money. The rational "The proposed Walleye regulation would standardize the Missouri River Walleye limit from Holter Dam to Black Eagle Dam. A daily limit of 20 fish and 40 in possession is expected to maximize harvest and maintain the trout fishery." That statement is a bunch of baloney being that the trout population had been at records highs for many years! Walleye is a sport fish and the limits should be the same as state limits: 5 daily & 10 in possession. When the no limit regulation was implemented, FWP biologists testified at the commission meeting that walleye were having no impact on the trout population. Sound science should be the major factor for managing fish, not special interest groups like Trout Unlimited and the Montana Outfitters Association. This was a political decision and it leaves a very bad taste in many anglers mouths knowing that the commisioner's can be swayed by political groups.
My partner and I have been fishing below Holter dam for 40 years and we strongly feel there should be a limit of 10 walleye instead of 20 per day because we feel that walleye are being Fished out compared to the blue ribbon trout which seem to be the highest fish population below Holter dam to Great Falls.
The proposed limit is still high, but better than no limit at all.
While this proposed reg is a step in the right direction, the walleye limit should be 5 daily, 10 in possession to correlate with all other bodies of water in Montana.
would like to see catch and release for trout only
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 34) Smith River

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
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Count of Prop 34 Response	28 (30.8%)	12 (13.2%)	51 (56%)	91
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No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Just put a catch and release on rainbow trout on the Smith river. This would take away angling opportunities for other species that are also hard to find on the mainstem river as well
You are taking smith river out of public use
Support
Cut number of guides
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 35) Stillwater River and Tributaries

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 35 Response	43 (47.8%)	3 (3.3%)	44 (48.9%)	90

No opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
No written comments.
Support
As with the Boulder River, this change is long overdue and will remove an enforcement issue for anglers who fish down the Boulder or Stillwater and also fish the Yellowstone on the same trip. Standard regulations are better than myriad exceptions from an angler's perspective. Harvest will still be minimal and those who champion catch and release are free to continue that practice. Harvest of additional fish will likely increase the average size of the trout since the available biomass (food supply) will still be present and will be shared by slightly fewer fish. Those who choose to harvest fish for a meal should be able to do so. The rivers can easily support an increased harvest of larger fish.
I am strongly in favor of changing this regulation to the standard Central Fishing District regulation of 5 trout, one over 18 inches. The reality is that very few anglers harvest trout anymore. This new regulation will not destroy the trout population as some of the catch and release crowd would have us believe. Harvest of all age and size class of trout is a necessary part of managing the population. Anglers who choose to catch and release trout will still be allowed to do so. Another benefit of this change is it simplifies the regulations for those of us who fish (and harvest from) several different rivers in the Central Fishing District.
Other
No written comments.

Eastern Fishing District

(Proposal 36) Ice Shelter Removal

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 36 Response	10 (18.9%)	2 (3.8%)	41 (77.4%)	53

No Opinion
It's pathetic that a law needs to be in place so that people remove their icehouses before they fall in the lake/reservoir.
Oppose
No written comments.
Support
No written comments.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 37) Paddlefish Reorganization

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 37 Response	17 (34.7%)	3 (6.1%)	29 (59.2%)	49

No Opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
With the exception of Paddle Fish I am totally against the snagging or spearing of game fish of any kind.
Support
Allow non game fish snagged while snagging for paddlefish to be harvested.
Better outlined on salmon snagging same rules as paddlefish? Or they different?
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 38) Bighorn River Sauger

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 38 Response	12 (24.5%)	4 (8.2%)	33 (67.3%)	49

No Opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Stop favoring one native species over another. Native species should be treated equally
Support
No written comments.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 39) Fort Peck Dredge Cuts Trout

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 39 Response	14 (29.2%)	0	34 (70.8%)	48

No written survey comments.

(Proposal 40) Hollecker Lake Bass

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 40 Response	14 (29.2%)	0	34 (70.8%)	48

No Opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Keep size limit to produce fish
Support
If it is a water that Bass do not do well in then they should not be there, same thing goes for any other specie. If it is incapable of sustaining it's self then it should not be there. This is an economic matter.
Smallmouth are hardier.
Other
No written comments.

(Proposal 41) Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 41 Response	21 (44.7%)	0	26 (55.3%)	47

No written comments received.

(Proposal 42) Missouri River Trout

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 42 Response	12 (25%)	1 (2.1%)	35 (72.9%)	48

No written comments received.

(Proposal 43) Musselshell River Sauger and Channel Catfish

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 43 Response	15 (30.6%)	4 (8.2%)	30 (61.2%)	49

No written comments received.

(Proposal 44) Yellowstone River Sauger

	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	Grand Total
Count of Prop 44 Response	9 (19.1%)	4 (8.5%)	34 (72.3%)	47

No Opinion
No written comments.
Oppose
Sauger are native. Treat them as such.
Support
More sauger then walleye around Forsyth
Other
No written comments.

Other Comments

Against keeping 1 over 22” during spawning closure. In favor of the more restricted LM limits. Totally against 15 SM limit with no spawning closure. This could be very damaging to the LM population as well due to inadequate enforcement. The goal is to reduce or eliminate the SM population however we all know this will not happen but we could very likely end up with an increased population of small fish and damage the trophy bass fishery of both specie.

<p>Should also consider shortening spawning closure of area lakes to begin on the 3rd Monday in May and reopen June 14th, leave Noxon and Cabinet Gorge as is.</p>
<p>Bass are an awesome angling opportunity in a diverse state. Trout are awesome but bass are great as well</p>
<p>Big Hole River. Each specific day of the week restricted to not allow outfitters and guides should be like the resident weekend days where non-resident (Idaho, Utah, Nevada, etc.) fishermen should not be allowed either. They are thick and overbearing.</p>
<p>Canyon Ferry walleye limit should be reduced. Priority needs to be given to feeder fish for walleye. Reconsider the "Floating Island" for reducing algae and fathead minnow enhancement.</p>
<p>Eliminate bait fishing for all anglers on Rock Creek (near Clinton). Teach kids at early age the importance of artificial lures. This is an important bull trout fishery and should not be using bate.</p>
<p>For one would hunting should be legal all year round. There is no way we will ever be able to get rid of all the wolves but to keep it lower would be in the animals beat interest that they prey on. Secondly Libby dam on the river side needs to let people keep bull trout. There is a catch card for the resavoir. It may help the. Rainbow fish out some and hopefully be able to allow fishermen to keep fish below the hwy 37 bridge like they used to. 28 inches is do able for some fishermen but not as likely. Please consider letting people harvest bull trout. Thank you</p>
<p>From spending a large amount of time on Fort Peck this season, I have talked to many people that would be in favor of a slot limit. This would maintain the lake as a trophy walleye fishery, which brings in a large amount of money for the areas close, and still allow fishermen plenty of opportunities to keep fish for cleaning. I have witnessed too many large fish being butchered because inexperienced people have no idea how to properly clean them and they end up in the fish grinder, meat and all. This is basically the same as poaching a trophy mammal without penalty.</p>
<p>FWP should identify a specific section or sections of the Flathead River for key management / catch and release only / added gear restrictions as needed. Work to build the population and habitat improvements in that section. Could become a key tourism draw and world class fishery that could obtain significant support.</p>
<p>get rid of motorized boats on the Flathead-there are plenty of bodies of water for recreational activities in the area</p>
<p>How do they determine perch counts?</p>

I am disappointed other changes were not considered to protect, preserve or maintain the walleye fisheries in central Montana. Canyon Ferry limits are not working. Holter used to be a lot better fishery than it is now with the daily 50 fish perch limits and no possession limits, and when we had a slot and lower limits for walleye. Regulation changes need to be considered based on current data and be more timely...vs waiting for three year running averages. For example, limits for 2020 for Canyon Ferry should be re-evaluated after the fall gill netting in 2019. Also, I believe consideration should be given to limits on the Missouri River above Canyon Ferry to protect what is there. The 20 fish limit is an abuse of the resource. A river environment is significantly different than the reservoir when you consider the life cycle and habits of Walleye in a river system. They are much more susceptible to angler harvest because they are in such defined spots. I believe regulations should be based primarily on scientific and biological data and that is not what is being done on the river below Holter.....with the no limit or a 20 fish limit as proposed for walleye.

I believe that the fwp is biased against the walleye and favors the trout fishing industry of the west such a high daily limit and bag limit on walleye it should be the same for the trout..two says walleye are not native to Montana but rainbow trout and not native to this country..

I believe that the 3rd Saturday in May opener for the central district should be reinstated. Keeping the large rivers open year around allowed plenty of opportunity for fishing. Now small streams are targeted for large trout on their runs. They used to be protected as they ran up the tributaries. Seems like opening these small streams to fishing year around was counter-productive to protecting native species spawning, such as the cutthroat and grayling. Additionally, Montana is a wild trout state, that no longer protects the wild trout population.

I believe there needs to be more diversity in fishing opportunities in different districts in Montana, there are many low water, warm water lakes in Montana that have a hard time supporting trout. When fish like bass, walleye, crappie and perch are not as affected. I love fishing the lakes around great falls. But unless you like to catch trout and walleye fishing is difficult for you. Many people travel long distances to catch trophy fish around the world. Below holter dam is a amazing trout fishing because of the limits, on amounts people can keep, and size limits. More lakes in Montana should have this opportunity. I'm not saying every lake, but some should be dedicated to catching trophy fish with strict limits. Which would mean you would have less stocking to do as well. which i know has budget issues already. Not everyone needs to load there boat up with 4 people and take home 20 fish every trip, and wonder why the fishing is slow the next year.

I think a length limit should be placed on walleye in fort peck. We do this to help the trout fisheries in montana for a more consistent quality of fish why not for walleye. I don't understand montana fwp's attack on walleye over trout. Walleye fisherman spend a lot of money in this state too but have very little voice.

I think no motorized boats above old steel bridge on Flathead and single barbless hook above blakenship bridge would greatly improve experience for all.

I would like it to be legal to fillet fish in the boat while on the water. If fish are injured while removing lures/hooks or start to die in the live well during hot weather, the only option now is to return to the dock, which could be several miles, and would ruin a good fishing day that one has spent considerable money or driven several miles to enjoy. Most boats do not have room to carry a cooler with ice that will hold several gutted 2-5 lb walleye or 8 lb plus pike. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

<p>I would like to have a rule change that would allow youth 15 and younger to be able to keep paddlefish on Sunday while 16 and older is still catch and release. The youth would not be shoulder to shoulder with adults that can be difficult to deal with for the kids when fishing. I have spoke to several other paddlefishermen about this issue and the agreed that there should be a day set aside for the youth to enjoy fishing. Thanks for your time.</p>
<p>I would like to propose a 2 fish limit or preferably a catch and release limit on Nylon Lake. With Willow Creek Reservoir being closed the pressure on Nylon Lake is going to be unbelievabl!!!!</p>
<p>I would like to see the allowance for an additional line in the western district specifically ice fishing for pike. This would not only help other non predatory species, by potentially harvesting more pike, but could also generate additional income if it were instituted in the form of a stamp for purchase on our fishing licenses. If instituted in this way, it would mitigate the more casual fisherman having lines out all over, while also allowing the more avid anglers an option if they would like.</p>
<p>I would like to see the Stillwater River (Flathead county) to be open all year. The river is a Pike fishery and access is limited due to mostly going through private property. If it was open in the winter it would allow people to move up and down being able to fish it.</p>
<p>I would like to see the western district ice fishing regulation of 2 lines with 2 hooks per line be changed to 4 lines with 2 hooks per line. I ice fish Seeley and Salmon lakes regularly, most of the fishermen there catch a few to no pike. With no limit on pike it seems we should be given more opportunity to catch them.</p>
<p>I would really like to see the entire Fish creek drainage west of Missoula changed to artificial lures only, no treble hooks, catch and release only. The stream has more pressure every year. These Fish need a chance to grow in size and numbers.</p>
<p>Im apposed to the proposal for the removal of the Smallmouth in Western Montana I do not want the spawning closures open, I do not want the daily limit to be 15 and no size restrictions I want to keep it like it is five a day and Spa enclosure will remain closed oh, I also do not want the wall I gone from these Waters I believe that we could have a great fish Reef for everything and everybody could be happy catching what they want if it is regulated right</p>
<p>I'm disappointed that I did not see a proposed regulation change for Canyon Ferry Reservoir reducing the walleye daily limit and possession limit and implementing a slot limit. I understand that the UMRRFMP has not been approved yet, however. If the 3 year running average is NOT the dictator of the plan and PSD is used to evaluate size criteria, it should allow FWP to be more proactive with walleye management. There is still a glimmer of hope that we will see a regulation change soon. We would like to see walleye in CF bigger than 13".</p>
<p>In areas with proposed single-pointed hook regulations, there should also be regulations to do away with bait fishing and barbed hooks to protect native fish.</p>
<p>Instead of teying to eradicate bass as a whole why not support the species</p>
<p>Many studies have been done to prove that Walleye are Native to Montana, the most recent out of Canada has made it quite clear that Walleye have always been Native to Montana via the Milk River. Let us finally give Walleye the protections and respect that our other Native species receive and list them as Native to Montana!</p>

Please consider reducing the cost of out of state 2 or 3 day licenses. I over an elderly couple from idaho who had come over to fish for a couple of days on Noxon Reservoir. They did not realize that it would cost them \$100 to fish for the weekend and went back home. My father who is retired and visiting from Arizona wanted to fish with me on Koocanusa and Cabinet Reservoir. He very reluctantly paid the \$50 to fish for 2 days.
Please continue to implement and support regulations for the four native Montana trout.
Please leave our bass alone. We work hard to promote a health fishery, not to have FWP destroy it!
Please listen to the people that are out there and lets try to get more money from the GOV. to employ more fish and game officers to enforce these regulations hunting and fishing, the people need to see more of them out there and enforcing laws for boating and fishing, poaching is getting worse and worse of fish and animals. the new comers moving do not know are laws and or care it seems from conversations i have had the docks and in the woods.
Please put no special restrictions on sauger downstream of Forsyth. WE're catching 10 or 15 sauger to 1 walleye.
Reduce walleye limit in Canyon Ferry to 5 daily and 10 in possession with only 1 over 20" This should help produce larger more desirable walleye size.
Replace proposed single point hook restrictions with barbless (no hook point) restrictions. Please use proven science instead of catering to whims of the fly fishing industry.
Require or at least encourage the use of fish descender devices when fishing at depths of " X-foot" or greater. I've seen fish released that had no chance of survival because of barotrauma. Keep up the good work.
Single hook barbless on flathead river, not just to Teakettle
Spearing in the central and eastern districts need to be opened up for more species. Currently from what I've read for spearing in the central district, it is open on all fishing waters to all non-game fish as well as game fish, but only designated waters. Even those designated waters are limited to mostly just northern pike but only through the ice. Montana is a landlocked state with very few places nearby to spear fish for more species of fish. This could open up the public to a fun new style of fishing and could help in areas where predation or illegal introduction of fish need to be either contained or removed. At the very least we should have at least a few ponds or lakes in the state that allow spear fishing for not just non-game fish. Non-game fish are small and make it not worth the effort to go spear fishing. If a pond or lake was stocked with bass, northern pike, muskie, walleye and other larger species of fish. With a limit of 1 or 2 per species per day and maybe having spearfishers report to FWP what they have caught then it would make a spearfishing trip worth the time and wouldn't lower the population of fish harvested so quickly compared to traditional pole fishing where in some areas a limit is 5 per day. This should be tested over the period of 6 months to a year and be recorded to see what impact spearfishing has made on fish populations in areas where it would be designated and the public's opinion and response on it.
Stopping the spread of Bass in the Western side of the state.
The Board of Flathead Wildlife only reviewed and commented on several specific regulation proposals for Flathead Wildlife, Inc.
The goal of the FWP Department should be to manage fisheries for sustainable species. Bass don't belong in a mountain lake or stream and Trout do not belong in a warm lake or shallow

<p>pond. That's not to say that many waters in Montana can support both a warm and cold water fishery but still should be managed to be sustainable.</p>
<p>the montana fwp has spent 40 years building largemouth fisherier isn Western Montana. Do not take the spring closeure off the lakes that have it already for Largemouth bass.. they need protected during the spawn..</p>
<p>The section of Lake Frances towards the outlet needs to have a closed time frame in the spring of the year. "The channel" gets hit extremely hard from ice off to roughly the 2nd week in May and this has to have an impact on the walleye population. I think buoys and signs could be placed from Bowman's point to the southern shoreline and have no fishing until May 15th or something like that. This would protect walleye that gather in that section and are being decimated more every year. I also would like to see some areas protected during walleye spawn. One such area would be Upper Holter. It's getting more and more popular to go up there and catch the big females prior to spawn. Although studies would have to be done, I would surmise that stressing these fish is having an impact on walleye reproduction.</p>
<p>up the fees on out of state licenses in the northwest of montana it is 3 to 1 idaho vs montana its out of control</p>
<p>We need to figure out a way to better manage the walleye in Canyon Ferry. I support a slot at CF. There are too many fish in the 10-13" range. Something needs to be done.</p>
<p>With the influx of people moving into the area could there be a plan to plant fish in all lakes and streams especially where numbers of all species are declining. And please leave the bass alone almost all lakes have better fisheries now than ever before</p>
<p>You might have guessed that I fish for bass. I think The Montana Bass Federation has reasonable and enforceable recommendations. LM Bass: 5 daily and in possession only 1 greater than 12" SM Bass: 5 daily and in possession - no size limit Combined Limit: 5SM and 1 LM daily and in possession no size limit Spawning Closure for both species - Third Monday in May through June 14 for all lakes with the exception of Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Reservoirs which would have spawning closure June 15 - July14 .</p>
<p>You should allow outfitters to access the North Fork of the Flathead. Keeping 200 miles for 4 outfitters is outrageous. They only have 18 miles for 30 outfitters on the lower river. Keep things fair and break up the congestion on the lower Flathead. It only makes sense to do so.</p>