



FISHING OUTFITTERS ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA

18 June 2020

Ms. Martha Williams
Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Director's Office
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Ms. Williams:

On behalf of the over 800 outfitter and guide members and the board of directors of the Fishing Outfitters Association (FOAM), I respectfully submit the attached petition that requests the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to adopt these new rules pertaining to the management of recreational use on the Madison River.

FOAM has had a seat at the table in formulating a Madison River recreation management plan since before the first Madison River Citizens Advisory Committee in 2011. FOAM also had a seat on last year's disbanded Madison River Negotiated Rulemaking Committee (NRC). Following that, FOAM previously submitted their commercial plan as a petition to the Commission in November 2019, which was denied. Since then, your department has been trying to gain formal approval of a Madison River recreation plan. However, no plan has received widespread public support or been approved by the Commission.

FOAM, having over 300 outfitter members and over 500 guide members statewide, also represents over 75% of the over 200 Madison River SRP holders. Through a recent survey of our members, this plan – again - has the overwhelming support from our members and the majority of commercial use support these recommendations as part of an adaptive Madison River commercial use management plan. Despite the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association sending a link to our survey with strong narrative that we are moving forward in the wrong direction, 72% of our respondents have asked that we proceed with submitting the commercial use management plan as a petition.

It is crystal clear to FOAM that the majority of commercial users are long past ready for a plan to be implemented. We respectfully request that support be given to allow this process to proceed in a timely manner and offer some sustainability to our industry and protection to the resource. This may very well be our last opportunity to implement a recreational management plan on the Madison River for the foreseeable future. We look forward to working through this process with FWP and the Commission to develop a recreation management plan on the Madison River that can work for all stakeholders.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael A. Bias'.

Michael A. Bias, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Cc: Commissioners Colton, Aldrich, Brower, Byorth, and Stuker.