



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** December 14, 2021

**Agenda Item:** Annual Rule Approved Commercial Bait Seining Waters

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 Minutes

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**Background:**

A commercial bait fish seining license is required for: 1) persons 15 years of age and older to seine for and transport bait fish for commercial purposes in Montana; and 2) for any person who seines for and has in their possession more than 24 dozen non-game bait fish. The commission may designate waters that are allowed for these purposes, and FWP describes these waters annually in the Commercial Bait Seining Application Form. Approved seining waters are regularly monitored for AIS and pathogens and maintain adequate population abundance to accommodate bait collection. For 2022, the department proposes to add one area to the approved commercial bait seining list: reservoirs in Arrow Creek drainage in Choteau, Fergus, and Judith Basin counties.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:**

The department released the proposed 2022 commercial bait seining list for public comment on November 18 and will accept comment through December 8. The department will present a summary of public comments at the December commission meeting.

**Alternatives and Analysis:**

The commission could approve the approved waters for bait seining list, modify the approved waters list, or not approve the approved waters list. Modifying the approved waters list would require additional analysis by department staff to determine if the addition or deletion of a waterbody would be appropriate to meet demand and/or pose an increased pathogen or invasive species risk. Not approving the approved waters list could jeopardize commercial baitfish collection. Department staff expect that waterbodies on the approved list are adequate to support commercial seining while maintaining viable fish populations and minimize risk of pathogens and AIS.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move that the commission approve the 2022 Approved Commercial Bait Seining Waters list.