



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: August 25, 2022

Agenda Item: Sha Ron FAS Site MDT Recreation Permit (Region 2)

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: On August 20, 2021, the Fish and Wildlife Commission authorized the department to conduct due diligence on expanding, acquiring, and developing a new parking and access area that is near the existing Sha Ron Fishing Access Site on the Clark Fork River near Missoula. Goals include increasing access and safety as vehicles currently stack up on old Highway 200 outside of Sha Ron in peak season, with visitors parking and walking along the highway to get into the FAS. The department has completed its due diligence and recommends that the commission authorize FWP to obtain a no-cost recreation management permit from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to accommodate the parking expansion and additional river access on an MDT site to the northeast of Sha Ron. FWP, Missoula County, and MDT have partnered to facilitate this opportunity. Upon execution, Missoula County would pay to develop the MDT property as an overflow, paved parking area for Sha Ron and a new walk-in river access point that allows for hand-carried watercraft such as kayaks and tubes. The new site would connect to Sha Ron by a pedestrian trail. FWP would be responsible for managing and maintaining the new site with an approximate annual cost of \$4,000. When fully developed and paired with Sha Ron, the new site will facilitate easy access to the river for fishing, floating, boating, swimming, and pedestrians. Both FWP enforcement and county law enforcement have been consulted and agree this project would improve access and public safety.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The department will issue a draft environmental assessment in June 2022. A summary of comments received, and decision notice will be posted no later than two weeks in advance of the August commission meeting.

Alternatives & Analysis:

Alternative A. No Action. There would be no additional parking or assurance of perpetual public access at this location.

Alternative B. Obtain a no-cost recreation management permit from MDT to allow development of additional parking and recreation access on an MDT site to enhance access to the Clark Fork River.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: The department recommends that the commission approve Alternative B. The project has the support of community partners and would enhance recreational opportunity and safety at Sha Ron FAS.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission authorize the department to obtain a no-cost recreation management permit from MDT to add parking and access to the Clark Fork River near the Sha Ron FAS.