



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: October 20, 2022

Agenda Item: 2023/24 Fishing Regulations

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 minutes

Background: The department is moving from an annual review of fishing regulations to a biennial cycle. Previously, each year the department would review and update the fishing regulations based on established criteria, and every four years the department would use a rigorous public process to update the fishing regulations. Implementing a two-year process could serve to reduce staff time needed for fishing regulation evaluation while providing more opportunity for public input. A two-year cycle could also allow more time to evaluate the effectiveness of fishing regulation changes. With this change, a new regulations booklet will be printed only on odd-numbered years, with any changes made outside the printing cycle updated on the department website and through other public outreach and posting. The attached proposal package contains the department regulation proposals for the 2023/2024 Montana Fishing Regulations with associated information on biological rationale and regulation type for each proposal.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Prior to development of the department proposal package, the Fisheries Division held a statewide public Zoom meeting, and each region hosted scoping meetings, Citizen Advisory Council meetings, and organized angler group meetings. Public proposals for regulation changes were received by the Fisheries Division for four weeks in May. The public input was used to help develop the department proposals. The commission public comment period starts on Aug. 26.

Analysis & Alternatives: The commission can accept the proposed regulation package from the department, modify proposals within the package, add additional regulation changes, or deny the proposed fishing regulations.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: *The Department recommends adopting the proposed regulations. Detailed rationales are provided for each regulation proposed change within the Regulation Proposal Package.*

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the 2023/24 fishing regulation package as presented.