



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: Aug. 17, 2023

Agenda Item: Future Fisheries Improvement Program projects, Summer 2023 funding cycle

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: The Future Fisheries Improvement Program (FFIP) continues to provide funds for projects that restore fishery habitats in streams, rivers, and lakes for the benefit of wild fisheries. Applications are reviewed twice each year by the 14-member Citizen Review Panel appointed by the governor. Recommendations are forwarded to the Fish and Wildlife Commission every six months for consideration and approval. For the summer 2023 funding cycle, the Citizen Review Panel recommends funding 8 of 8 submitted proposals at a program cost of \$427,484.50. Matching funds total \$896,500 and other contributions total nearly \$360,000, producing a ratio of \$2.9 in external contributions to every \$1 of FFIP funding.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The public is informed about program funding opportunities via news releases, a public meeting, and information posted on FWP's website. The Citizen Review Panel conducted a public meeting on June 16, 2023, and reviewed applications, discussed proposed projects with applicants in attendance, and provided the opportunity for public comment. No public comments were received at the meeting, except from applicants in attendance. All applications received for the funding cycle were posted on FWP's website, which allowed viewers to submit comments online. No online comments were received. Every funded project will undergo review for environmental compliance prior to project initiation; of the 8 recommended projects, 6 are categorically excluded and 2 will have EAs completed by FWP staff. Current applications, recommendations, and ranking information can be found on the FFIP website at www.fwp.mt.gov/FFIP under *Summer 2023 Grant Applications and Meeting Materials*.

Alternatives and Analysis:

A. The commission could approve funding recommendations for active projects submitted by the Citizen Review Panel and prioritized by the ranking committee. This alternative would provide funds to assist in the completion of projects that will improve habitat for wild fish populations.

B. The commission could disapprove or modify the recommendations of the Citizen Review Panel. Under this alternative, applicants would need to seek other sources of funding or suspend projects that otherwise would have benefited wild fish populations.

Agency Rationale and Recommendation:

The department requests the FFIP Citizen Review Panel funding recommendations for the Summer 2023 funding cycle be approved as presented. FWP believes that FFIP funding continues to restore rivers, streams, and lakes to improve Montana's wild fish habitats by providing funding for projects that revitalize wild fish populations.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the Citizen Review Panel funding recommendations for the Summer 2023 funding cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.