



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: Dec. 14, 2023

Agenda Item: Kelly Reservoir Illegal Fish Introduction Removal

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background: Kelly Reservoir is a private reservoir located approximately six miles northeast of Choteau, Montana. This six-acre reservoir is actively enrolled in FWP's Private Pond Access Program and is stocked annually with rainbow trout. Standardized 2023 fall sampling discovered an illegal introduction of walleye. This species is undesirable to the landowner and poses a risk to the quality of the current fishery. Where possible and where necessary, FWP mitigates threats of illegal introductions. Regional staff propose to coordinate with the landowners to remove the illegally introduced walleye through mechanical or chemical methods and restore the rainbow trout fishery.

Public Involvement Process & Results: After commission approval, further analysis for the project will occur for the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) compliance, typically involving environmental assessment development and a 15-day public comment period.

Alternatives & Analysis: A) The commission could choose to approve the proposed illegal fish introduction removal project and regional staff will initiate the MEPA process, preparatory work, and planning. Alternative B) The commission could approve a proportion of the proposed work and the department would respond accordingly. Alternative C) The commission could choose to not approve the project and the department would not remove the illegally introduced walleye.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: The department recommends approving the removal project for the illegally introduced fish as proposed. Commission approval allows FWP staff to initiate the MEPA process, preparatory work, and planning.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the Kelly Reservoir illegal fish introduction removal project.