



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: February 22, 2023

Agenda Item: Ruby Dam Fishing Access Site Lease Agreement

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background: Ruby Dam Fishing Access Site (FAS) is a day-use site at the mouth of Ruby Dam about seven miles south of Alder on the Ruby Dam Road. FWP operates Ruby Dam FAS under a no-cost recreational lease from Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). The most recent lease expired in Aug. 2022 and FWP wishes to enter a new lease on that site that would be in effect from Feb. 2023 through Dec. 2032. The major terms in the lease remain the same as before: FWP would be responsible for recreational management and maintenance of the site. New terms in the lease would allow for a rustic campground to be added. If that action is contemplated in the future, the department would conduct an environmental assessment (EA) and public comment process before making a decision. No development is contemplated at this time.

Public Involvement Process & Results: DNRC completed an EA for this project in July 2022 and received no public comment. FWP proposed adopting DNRC's EA and initiated an additional 14-day public comment period in late November. No comments were received. The decision notice was issued December 9.

Analysis & Alternatives: Continuing to lease this site from DNRC would benefit the two partner agencies and the recreating public. This site and other FASes along the Ruby River provide excellent recreational opportunities and its loss would be a detriment to the region.

Alternative A: Preferred alternative. FWP will enter into a new, 10-year no-cost recreational lease with DNRC for the purpose of managing and maintaining recreational opportunities at Ruby Dam FAS.

Alternative B: No action. If the new lease is not approved, FWP would need to remove infrastructure (such as the vault latrine) and cease all other management and maintenance of the site. This change could negatively impact recreational opportunities along the Ruby River depending on how management of the site was determined by DNRC for the future.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: The department recommends the commission approve this recreational lease as presented for the benefit of the public and management of recreational use at the site.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission authorize FWP to approve this recreational lease with DNRC for the Ruby Dam FAS.