



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: Oct. 10, 2024

Agenda Item: 2024 Public Use Rules Deviations

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 minutes

Background: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks recently completed a consolidation of public use rules that serve all recreation and conservation properties administered by FWP (ARM 12.12.101-140). These define rules for FASEs, WMAs, and other FWP-owned public use sites. Deviations to these rules require commission approval. FWP staff reviewed these rules across hundreds of sites since December. FWP missed bringing a few deviations to the August 2024 commission meeting and is seeking approval for these. Unless otherwise noted as new, these deviations are a continuation of the current status and management practice at the site(s), noted as existing. Proposed rule deviations are in reference to the following ARM rule.

- 12.12.107: Designated and Dispersed Camping Sites – proposed rule deviations related to extending camping stay limits beyond the seven-night stay limit in a 30-day period during the non-peak season, providing and establishing additional camping opportunities, and specifying camping designations and restrictions. Non-peak season is defined from the third Monday of September through the third Thursday of May.

FWP proposes adoption of these rule deviations for one year, to be reviewed annually. These will be included in the master list for future reviews.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The public use rules went through MAPA, which included a robust public comment process, and gave the public an opportunity to comment on the public use rules at least three separate times. FWP received comment through this process on also offering future public comment on any rule deviations. The department will solicit public comment prior to the August commission meeting. Public comments will be posted online and provided to commissioners at least two weeks prior to the October commission meeting.

Alternatives & Analysis: The rule deviations FWP proposes the commission reapprove (i.e., existing) have been supported by current and past commissions over the past decade or longer. The proposed new changes are listed with justifications in the attachment. For both the existing and proposed deviations, the commission may adopt, modify, or reject any one or all of them. In general, the proposed deviations accommodate unique local circumstances.

The commission has three alternatives: 1) to approve none of the existing or proposed rule deviations; 2) to approve some of the existing or proposed rule deviations; or 3) to approve all the existing or proposed rule deviations.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends readoption of the existing rule deviations and adoption of the proposed rule deviations as presented. The recommendations support consistency and clarity regarding the opportunities and rules for specific sites.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission reapprove the existing rule deviations and approve the proposed rule deviations as presented by the department.



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