



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: February 12, 2026

Agenda Item: Bitterroot River Motorized Use Closure

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: In recent years, numerous landowners along tributaries to the Bitterroot River have contacted Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks regarding public jetboating. FWP views motorized use of tributaries to the Bitterroot River between Woodside Crossing Fishing Access Site (FAS) and John and Nancy Owen FAS as being unsafe and potentially damaging to habitat for native fish. FWP proposes to close these tributaries for motorized use year-round.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The Montana Secretary of State (SOS) defines and implements the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) development and amendment process, including associated steps and timeline. This identifies opportunities for public participation in the form of both a public hearing and the submission of written comments. This agenda item involves the request for commission approval for the filing of a formal rule proposal notice with the SOS to initiate the Montana Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA) rulemaking process. The administrative rule proposal notice would then be published in the Montana Administrative Register and posted on the FWP website and would include information on the timeline and methods for submission of written comment and the public hearing date. At the conclusion of that MAPA comment and hearing process, FWP will provide the commission with the public comments received along with a draft MAPA notice proposing the final adoption of the administrative rule for its review, consideration, and action at a future commission meeting.

Alternatives & Analysis: The commission may choose:

Alternative A: The commission may approve FWP's proposal to initiate rulemaking to amend the ARM as proposed.

Alternative B: The commission may deny FWP's proposal, and FWP would not proceed with initiating the MAPA process to amend the ARM as proposed.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the commission approve the proposal to initiate rulemaking to address safety and resource concerns.

Proposed Motion: I move that Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the request to initiate rulemaking to amend the ARM as presented by FWP.