



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL & INFORMATION SHEET

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Meeting Date: October 15, 2026

Agenda Item: Public Use and Commercial Use Fee Schedules

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 minutes

Background: FWP collects fees for the public and commercial use of state parks, fishing access sites, wildlife management areas, and other FWP-managed sites. The revenue generated by these user fees contributes to site operations and maintenance. The public use fees (e.g., camping fees) have not been comprehensively updated since 2014 and commercial use fees (e.g., vendor fees) have not been updated since 2007. Since that time, the cost of operating and maintaining sites has increased. Additionally, some of the fees are considered confusing and difficult to understand. FWP is proposing to adjust fees to better reflect inflation and the increasing costs of maintaining public recreation sites, simplify fee schedule structure, and maintain affordable and fair fees. Staff researched Consumer Price Index increases, as well as fees from state agencies in surrounding states, federal agencies, and private entities to inform the proposal.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission's role is to approve fees for all sites except those fees that are specific to only state parks. For the proposed public use fee schedule, the commission must approve camping fees for fishing access sites, wildlife management areas, and wildlife habitat protection areas (p. 2); special use permit fees for group use or facility rentals for all FWP sites (p. 3); other fees for all FWP sites (p. 3); and reservation fees for all FWP sites (p. 3). For the proposed commercial use fee schedule, the commission must approve the fishing access site fees (p. 2), wildlife management area fees (p. 3), other/additional fees (p. 3), and fees for restricted waterbodies/rivers (p. 4). The Parks and Recreation Board will review and decide on fees for state parks at their December meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results: FWP published draft public use and commercial use fee schedules for public comment from June 24 to July 24. The department received 164 relevant comments and incorporated public input into the latest draft fee schedules for commission review. The department will solicit additional public comment on the latest drafts for a four-week period prior to the October commission meeting. Public comments will be posted online and provided to commissioners at least two weeks prior to the October commission meeting.

Alternatives & Analysis:

- A. No action. Current public use and commercial use fees would remain in place. There would be no additional revenue. Some of the fees would remain confusing to users.
- B. Adopt the public use and commercial use fee schedules as presented. This would generate additional revenue needed to operate and maintain FWP sites. The fees would be easier to understand and apply.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the commission adopt this proposal as presented with no changes (Alternative B). This would generate additional revenue needed to operate and maintain FWP sites.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the Public Use and Commercial Use Fee Schedules.