



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: February 13, 2020

Agenda Item: Future Fisheries Improvement Program Winter 2020 Funding Cycle

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background:

The Future Fisheries Improvement Program continues to provide funds for projects that restore fishery habitats in streams, rivers and lakes for the benefit of wild fisheries. Applications are reviewed twice each year by the 14-member Citizen Review Panel appointed by the Governor. Recommendations are forwarded to the Fish & Wildlife Commission every six months for consideration and approval. For the Winter 2020 funding cycle, the Citizen Review Panel recommends funding 10 of 12 submitted proposals at a program cost of \$277,575. Matching funds or in-kind contributions from outside sources total \$2.15 million for a 7.7-to-1 match.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

The public is informed about program funding opportunities via news releases, a public meeting, and information posted on FWP's website. The Citizen Review Panel conducted a public meeting and reviewed applications, discussed proposed projects with applicants in attendance, and provided the opportunity for public comment. No public comment was received at the meeting, except from applicants in attendance. All applications received for the funding cycle were posted on FWP's website, which allowed viewers to submit comments online. No online comments were received. Environmental Assessments (EAs) were prepared for four of the 10 projects recommended for funding. Of the remaining six, five have been or will be assessed under the federal National Environmental Policy Act, and one will have an EA completed by the applicant. The comment period for drafted EAs ended February 2, and no comments have been received. An update on EA comments will be provided at the commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The commission could approve funding as recommended by the Citizen Review Panel and prioritized by the ranking committee. The commission could also not approve or modify the recommendations of the Citizen Review Panel. If not approved, applicants would need to seek other sources of funding or suspend projects intended to benefit wild fish populations. The department recommends funding projects as recommended by the Citizen Review Panel.

Proposed Motion:

I move the commission approve the Citizen Review Panel funding recommendations for the winter 2020 funding cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.