

BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the adoption of an) NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF
emergency rule closing the Cree) EMERGENCY RULE
Crossing Wildlife Management Area)
on the Milk River in Phillips County)

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (department) has determined the following reasons justify the adoption of an emergency rule:

(a) The Milk River is experiencing significant to moderate flooding. The dangerous conditions include high water levels which have flooded the lower parking area (the parking area closest to the Milk River) of the Cree Crossing Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

(b) Persons parking in the lower parking area would be at risk of fast-moving currents, unexpectedly being swept into the river, and injury or drowning due to unexpected changes to topography obscured by flood waters.

(c) Persons recreating at the WMA should park at the upper parking area (the parking area furthest away from the Milk River).

(d) Therefore, as this situation constitutes an imminent peril to public health, safety, and welfare, and this threat cannot be averted or remedied by any other administrative act, the department adopts the following emergency rule. The emergency rule will be sent as a press release to newspapers throughout the state. Also, signs informing the public of the parking area closure will be posted at access points. The rule will be sent to interested parties and published as an emergency rule in Issue No. 8 of the 2023 Montana Administrative Register.

2. The department will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in the rulemaking process and need an alternative accessible format of the notice. If you require an accommodation, contact the department no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 12, 2023, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact Regina Reynolds, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701; telephone (406) 444-9785; or e-mail reginareynolds@mt.gov.

3. The emergency rule is effective April 13, 2023, when this rule notice is filed with the Secretary of State.

4. The text of the emergency rule provides as follows:

NEW RULE I CREE CROSSING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
PARTIAL EMERGENCY CLOSURE – LOWER PARKING AREA (1) Cree Crossing WMA is located along the Milk River in Phillips County.

(2) The lower parking area of Cree Crossing WMA (the parking area closest to the Milk River) is closed to all public occupation and recreation as signed.

(3) This rule will expire as soon as the department determines that the lower parking area of Cree Crossing WMA is again safe for public occupancy and recreation. This will depend on the extent and the duration of flooding in the area. Signs closing the lower parking area of Cree Crossing WMA will be removed when the rule is no longer effective.

AUTH: 2-4-303, 87-1-202, MCA
IMP: 2-4-303, 87-1-202, MCA

5. The rationale for the emergency rule is set forth in paragraph 1.

6. Concerned persons are encouraged to submit their comments to the department. Please submit comments along with names and addresses to: Regina Reynolds, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT, 59602-0701; e-mail regina.reynolds@mt.gov. Any comments must be received no later than May 26, 2023.

7. The department maintains a list of interested persons who wish to receive notice of rulemaking actions proposed by the department or commission. Persons who wish to have their name added to the list shall make written request that includes the name and mailing address of the person to receive the notice and specifies the subject or subjects about which the person wishes to receive notice. Such written request may be mailed or delivered to Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Legal Unit, P.O. Box 200701, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59620-0701, faxed to the office at (406) 444-7456, or may be made by completing the request form at any rules hearing held by the department.

8. The bill sponsor contact requirements of 2-4-302, MCA, do not apply.

9. The special notice requirements of 2-4-303, MCA have been met. All committee members and staff of the Environmental Quality Council, with addresses provided on the Montana Legislature's website (leg.mt.gov), were contacted by e-mail on April 13, 2023.

/s/ Dustin Temple
Dustin Temple
Acting Director
Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

/s/ Alexander Scolavino
Alexander Scolavino
Rule Reviewer

Certified to the Secretary of State April 13, 2023.