



Montana State Parks & Recreation Board

Agenda Item Cover Sheet

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: March 3, 2022

Agenda Item: Smith River State Park and River Corridor Biennial Rule and Administrative Rule 12.14.120

Time Needed on Agenda: 20 Minutes

Background: At its December 2021 meeting the Parks & Recreation Board extended the Smith River State Park & River Corridor biennial rules for one year to allow time for Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to update the Smith River State Park and River Corridor Recreation Management Plan. The Environmental Assessment (EA) Decision Notice for the updated plan was signed by FWP on February 2, 2022. FWP is recommending changes to the biennial rule to implement elements of the updated plan. FWP is also recommending striking language in the biennial rule and administrative rule 12.14.120 that pertains to the transfer of a Smith River Outfitter's business to reflect statutory changes made by the 2021 Legislature.

Public Involvement Process: The Decision Notice was informed by 104 public comments. FWP would conduct a public involvement process if the Board initiates rulemaking.

Alternatives & Analysis:

➤ **Management of Camp Baker**

Alternative A: Establish Camp Baker as day-use only with exception of the time-period from September 1 – November 30. The rule would address natural and cultural resource impacts and congestion at Camp Baker and allow for a limited amount of camping during off-peak times. Registration and boat camp selection would occur via phone or online.

Alternative B: Allow camping at Camp Baker. This alternative wouldn't address the resource impacts & congestion concerns. Historically, much of the overnight use was associated with first-come, first-served selection of boat camps. The phone boat camp selection process eliminated the need for this.

➤ **Human Waste Management**

Alternative A: Require all floaters to pack-out solid human waste using self-contained toilet systems with disposal at or near the Eden Bridge take-out. Sixty-five percent of the EA public comments supported this alternative. The rule would address natural and cultural resource impacts and health concerns associated with the pit latrines.

Alternative B: Continue using pit latrines. This alternative would appeal to floaters opposed to a pack-out system but there would still be natural and cultural resource impacts and human health concerns.

➤ **Smith River Fee System**

Alternative A: Increase fees. Float fees were last increased in 2003 (residents, outfitters) and 2010 (nonresidents). The revenue would be used for operation and maintenance of the human waste pack-out and disposal system.

Alternative B: Retain current fees. The current fee system would not provide enough revenue for operation and maintenance of a human waste disposal system at Eden Bridge or ranger presence at boat camps and on the river.

➤ **Outfitter Trip Transfers**

Alternative A: Strike language in the biennial rule and ARM 12.14.120(14) that pertain to the temporary or permanent transfer of an outfitter trip (launch) to avoid conflict with 37-47-310(4)(a), MCA.

Alternative B: Retain current language in the biennial rule and the administrative rule pertaining to the transfer of a Smith River Outfitter trip (launch). Language conflicts with 37-47-310(4)(a), MCA.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends Alternative A for all four topics for the purpose of implementing the updated recreation management plan and complying with statutory changes by the 2021 Legislature.

Proposed Motion: I move the Parks and Recreation Board approve the proposed rules establishing Camp Baker as day-use only with the September 1 to November 30 exception, requiring human waste pack-out using self-contained toilet systems, increasing the Smith River float fees, and striking language pertaining to outfitter trip transfers.