



Final Fishing Regulation Proposals for 2017 including summary of public comment

Proposal Summary

Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we solicited public comment on 15 recommended changes to the 2016 Montana Fishing Regulations as approved for public review by the Fish and Wildlife Commission on August 11, 2016. Our proposed changes and the remaining regulations carried forward from 2016 will potentially constitute the Montana Fishing Regulations for 2017. FWP revisits comprehensive regulation reform once every four years, our last comprehensive review occurred during 2015. With Commission approval, existing regulations including the modifications recommended here will take effect on March 1, 2017. As was true in 2016, these regulations are intended to remain largely unchanged through 2019.

We received a total of 279 comments. This total includes 62 comments added to an online survey that also produced 206 selections characterizing respondents' opinion as Support, Oppose, or No Opinion. We received nine additional comments by email, and two comments provided verbally at the August 11, 2016 F&W Commission meeting. Thirty-four comments suggested new regulations, or addressed subjects other than the 2017 fishing regulation proposals.

After incorporating public comment and with further internal review, 14 of the 15 proposals initially brought forward in 2016 are recommended to be adopted as initially proposed. One proposal affecting the Big Hole River is recommended to be withdrawn. All 15 recommendations with rationale are presented below, including a summary of public comment for each.

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Note: New language is in colored *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~. Page numbers refer to the **2016 Montana Fishing Regulations** booklet.

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WESTERN DISTRICT –Region 1

Proposal 1- Adjust regulations for clarity and conservation purposes for Lake Creek (near Troy). [Survey ref: Q4]

See p. 40, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

DELETE existing language:

~~LAKE CREEK (near Troy)~~

~~150 yards downstream of Keeler Creek to mouth~~

~~Brown trout: no limit~~

~~Snagging: open for Salmon from September 15 through November 30.~~

Entire Stream

Open to fishing all year.

Rearrange and ADD:

LAKE CREEK (near Troy)

Open to fishing all year, *except 150 yards upstream of Keeler Creek to Chase Cutoff*

Bridge: Closed to angling from July 15 through October 31.

Brown trout: no limit.

Snagging: *Downstream of Troy Dam* open for *Kokanee* Salmon from September 15 through November 30.

Public Comment (5 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received five survey responses to this proposal, with no additional written comments. We received no other comments. Four respondents supported the proposal, the other expressed that they had no opinion concerning this proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. Adjustments this year clarify that no limit for Brown Trout applies to all of Lake Creek. They also more explicitly protect an important stretch of stream where Bull Trout stage prior to moving into and out of the Keeler Creek spawning tributary. The proposal restricts snagging to downstream of the Troy dam to help avoid misunderstandings about where this activity is allowed, and to more clearly prohibit snagging in and around Keeler Creek during Bull Trout migration.

Note: New language is in colored *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~. Page numbers refer to the **2016 Montana Fishing Regulations** booklet.

Proposal 2- Adjust regulations for clarity and conservation purposes for the Middle Fork Flathead River. [Survey ref: Q5]

See p. 42, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

MIDDLE FORK FLATHEAD RIVER ~~DRAINAGE~~

~~All streams within the wilderness~~

~~Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches in rivers and streams, no size limit in lakes. Includes Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat Trout and Arctic Grayling.~~

Non-wilderness portion

NOTE: Montana/Glacier National Park boundary is the ordinary high water mark on the park side of the river.

Closed to angling June 1 through September 30 within a 150-yard radius of the Bear Creek stream mouth.

Catch-and-release for Cutthroat Trout.

Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession.

Extended Whitefish season and catch-and release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

Public Comment (6 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016 we received six survey responses to this proposal including one elaborated with an additional written comment. We received no other comments. Five respondents confirmed support for the proposal, one referenced they had left a comment elsewhere in the survey. One respondent expressed that they had no opinion on this proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. In 2015, the Western District Standard limit for Westslope Cutthroat Trout in rivers and streams was changed to 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches, the same regulation which formerly had been applied to Wilderness areas. This change was intended to create better uniformity and ease of understanding of regulations intended to conserve Westslope Cutthroat Trout across the Western District. Applying this regulation last year to the combined trout regulation for Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling in the Middle Fork Flathead River, however, resulted in a limit that is more restrictive than our management goals require for either species. To remedy this consequence, and to better clarify management intentions for the Middle Fork Flathead River, the proposal this year maintains the more conservative regulation for Westslope Cutthroat Trout, eliminates an exception for this species in the Wilderness that is no longer needed because it is contained in the Western District Standard for Westslope Cutthroat Trout, and changes the combined trout limit for Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling in the Wilderness to agree with the Western District Standard limit of 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches. These changes are needed to help simplify and clarify the Middle Fork Flathead River Wilderness regulations by bringing them into conformity with current Western District Standard management regulations.

Note: New language is in colored *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~. Page numbers refer to the **2016 Montana Fishing Regulations** booklet.

Proposal 3- Adjust regulations for clarity and conservation purposes for South Fork Flathead River. [Survey ref: Q6]

See p. 45, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

SOUTH FORK FLATHEAD RIVER DRAINAGE

~~All waters upstream from Hungry Horse Dam, including Hungry Horse Reservoir and tributaries except Meadow Creek section (see below)~~

~~Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches in rivers and streams, no size limit in lakes. Includes Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat Trout and Arctic Grayling.~~

Mainstem upstream from Hungry Horse Reservoir (from Crossover Boat Ramp south and upstream to the confluence of Youngs and Danaher creeks)

Bull Trout: catch-and-release from the third Saturday in May through July 31. A

Hungry Horse/South Fork Flathead Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for Bull Trout. See Special License requirements for application information. All Bull Trout must be released immediately. It is unlawful to possess a live Bull Trout for any reason.

Meadow Creek Bridge to Spotted Bear foot bridge and tributaries

Catch-and-release *only for cutthroat trout*.

Artificial lures only.

Hungry Horse Dam downstream to Devil's Elbow and tributaries

Closed entire year.

Devil's Elbow downstream to mouth and tributaries

Catch-and-release for Cutthroat Trout.

Extended season for Whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

Public Comment (6 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016 we received six survey responses to this proposal without further elaboration. We received no other comments. Five respondents confirmed support for the proposal. One respondent expressed that they had no opinion concerning this proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. In 2015, the Western District Standard limit for Westslope Cutthroat Trout in rivers and streams was changed to 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches, the same regulation which formerly had been applied to Wilderness areas. This change was intended to create better uniformity and ease of understanding of regulations intended to conserve Westslope Cutthroat Trout across the Western District. Applying this regulation last year to the combined trout regulation for Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling in the South Fork Flathead River, however, resulted in a limit that is more restrictive than our management goals require for either species. To remedy this consequence, and to better clarify management intentions for the South Fork Flathead River, the proposal this year maintains the more conservative regulation for Westslope Cutthroat Trout, and changes the combined trout

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limit for Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling in the Wilderness to agree with the Western District Standard limit of 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.

The text added to the catch and release regulation clarifies that this regulation is specific to Cutthroat Trout and not to non-native species. The added text also helps make clear that Bull Trout catch card and associated regulations for this species are consistent throughout the river.

For the Meadow Creek Bridge to Spotted Bear foot bridge and tributaries section, we propose to add the text “for Cutthroat Trout” to clarify that the catch and release regulation is specific to Cutthroat Trout and not to other species. This regulation was never intended to provide protection and restrict harvest for Rainbow Trout, Mountain Whitefish and Arctic Grayling. Similarly, a Bull Trout catch card requirement, a special fishing season, and associated restrictions, have always been applied to Bull Trout in this reach. Adding text specifying that catch and release applies only to Cutthroat Trout helps support the Bull Trout regulations as well, by ensuring they are consistent throughout the river.

WESTERN DISTRICT – Region 2

Proposal 4 - Reduce trout harvest limit, no limit for other species, Silver's Lagoon aka McCormick Pond (Missoula). [Survey ref: Q7]

See p. 42, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

McCORMICK POND aka SILVER'S LAGOON (Missoula).

~~Open April 1 through October 30.~~

~~3 fish daily and in possession, any species~~

~~Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger.~~

Regulations are re-ordered to match the complimentary entry for SILVER'S LAGOON aka MCCORMICK POND, trout limit is reduced, no limit for other species:

McCORMICK POND aka SILVER'S LAGOON (Missoula).

Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger.

Open April 1 through October 30.

~~3 fish daily and in possession, any species.~~ *Combined trout, including cutthroat trout: 1 fish daily and in possession.*

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Trout limit reduced, no limit for other species:

SILVER'S LAGOON aka McCORMICK POND (Missoula).

Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger.

Open April 1 through October 30.

~~3 fish daily and in possession, any species.~~ *Combined trout, including cutthroat trout: 1 fish daily and in possession.*

Note: New language is in colored *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~. Page numbers refer to the **2016 Montana Fishing Regulations** booklet.

Public Comment (8 total). Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received eight survey responses to this proposal, one that elaborated support with an additional written comment. We received no other comments. Five respondents confirmed support, and three expressed that they had no opinion concerning this proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. Reducing the harvest limit from 3 fish to 1 fish and specifying trout conserves the abundance of stocked fish over time, which allows more youth anglers the opportunity to keep a trout. Specifying trout also eliminates current restrictions on the harvest of non-trout species that should be removed from the pond (e.g., northern pike). As an additional benefit, the City of Missoula Recreation Department requested this regulation change during scoping in 2015. They organize events at the pond and regularly monitor its use. This regulation change helps to maximize the opportunity for young anglers to catch a trout from a heavily used and relatively small-sized body of water.

CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 3

Proposal 5- Modify Big Hole River fishing regulations for clarity and to enhance Arctic Grayling conservation. [Survey ref: Q8]

See P. 60, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

Big Hole River

Fishing Regulations

Delete 2016 Version:

~~**Entire River**~~

~~Catch and release for Arctic Grayling.~~

~~Extended season for Whitefish and catch and release for trout open December 1 to the third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots.~~

~~**Headwaters to North Fork Big Hole River**~~

~~Brook Trout open entire year.~~

~~**Headwaters to Dickie Bridge**~~

~~Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, no size restriction.~~

~~**Dickie Bridge to Melrose Bridges**~~

~~Artificial lures only.~~

Proposed 2017 Version:

Headwaters to Dickie Bridge

Open all year

Catch and release for Arctic Grayling

Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, no size restriction.

Brook Trout: 20 daily and in possession

Dickie Bridge to Melrose Bridges

Catch and release for Arctic Grayling

Note: New language is in colored *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~. Page numbers refer to the **2016 Montana Fishing Regulations** booklet.

*Artificial lures only.

Catch and release only for trout December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots

Melrose Bridges to the mouth

Catch and release for Arctic Grayling

Catch and release only for trout December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots.

Public Comment (16 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 16 survey responses to this proposal, including two in opposition that were expanded with additional written comments. We received no other comments. Four respondents opposed the proposal, one stating that the 2016 version was clearer to them than the 2017 proposal, one stating that they opposed not allowing harvest for trout from December 1 to the third Saturday in May. Eight respondents expressed support, and four indicated they had no opinion.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Withdraw the Proposal: Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this proposal be entirely withdrawn. This proposal was primarily intended to clarify fishing regulations for each segment of the Big Hole River, however on further consideration we feel this goal will be better realized after more opportunity to discuss specific wording changes with our many constituents. The current version of this regulation is sufficient to protect the fisheries and to optimize angling opportunities. Future efforts could include drafting alternatives to see which of several options might be easier for the majority of people to understand. Should these or similar efforts result in a more satisfactory proposal for most constituents, FWP will revisit this concern with the F&W Commission at a later date.

Proposal 6- Reinstate seasonal spawning protections for Rainbow Trout in Duck Creek. [Survey ref: Q9]

New regulation exception

Duck Creek

Open third Saturday in May through November 30.

Public Comment (18 total). Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 18 survey responses to this proposal including three in opposition that were expanded with additional written comments. We received one other comment by email. Thirteen respondents supported the proposal without further elaboration. Three respondents opposed the proposal, one stating that the seasonal closure should remain in effect longer than proposed, one requesting we do not close the stream at all noting that fish are very abundant, and one suggesting that we wait to see if whitefish start to die. Three respondents expressed no opinion concerning the proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Note: New language is in colored *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~. Page numbers refer to the **2016 Montana Fishing Regulations** booklet.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. In 2016, opening most rivers and streams to year-round angling in the Central Fishing District expanded many fishing opportunities. This change was made with the understanding that evaluations of the new regulation might require reinstating seasonal fishing restrictions on a case by case basis, if information suggested this action would be prudent to conserve particular fisheries. FWP investigations of Hebgen Reservoir, including microchemistry evaluations, studies using tetracycline marking, and fin erosion examinations, now confirm that wild reproduction of Rainbow Trout contributes most (over 80%) of the Rainbow Trout in Hebgen Reservoir. We also know that several Hebgen Lake tributaries are especially important to wild fish recruitment to the reservoir. Duck Creek is one of these tributaries. On the basis of all this information, establishing seasonal protections for spawning Rainbow Trout for this tributary seems prudent at this time.

Proposal 7- Reinstate seasonal spawning protections for Rainbow Trout in Grayling Creek. [Survey ref: Q10]

New regulation exception

Grayling Creek

Open third Saturday in May through November 30.

Public Comment (18 total). Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 18 survey responses to this proposal including three that were expanded with additional written comments. We received one other comment by email. Fourteen respondents supported the proposal. Two respondents opposed the proposal, one stating that the seasonal closure should remain in effect longer than proposed, and one requesting we do not close the stream at all. Three respondents expressed that they had no opinion on the proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. In 2016, opening most rivers and streams to year-round angling in the Central Fishing District expanded many fishing opportunities. This change was made with the understanding that evaluations of the new regulation might require reinstating seasonal fishing restrictions on a case by case basis, if information suggested this action would be prudent to conserve particular fisheries. FWP investigations of Hebgen Reservoir, including microchemistry evaluations, studies using tetracycline marking, and fin erosion examinations, now confirm that wild reproduction of Rainbow Trout contributes most (over 80%) of the Rainbow Trout in Hebgen Reservoir. We also know that several Hebgen Lake tributaries are especially important to wild fish recruitment to the reservoir. Grayling Creek is one of these tributaries. On the basis of all this information, establishing seasonal protections for spawning Rainbow Trout for this tributary seems prudent at this time.

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Proposal 8- Reinstate seasonal spawning protections for the South Fork Madison River. [Survey ref: Q11]

New regulation exception

South Fork Madison River

Open third Saturday in May through November 30.

Public Comment (18 total). Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 18 survey responses to this proposal including two that were expanded with additional written comments. We received one other comment by email. Thirteen survey respondents supported the proposal without further elaboration. Three respondents opposed the proposal, one suggesting that a high percentage of anglers release trout anyway, and one stating that the seasonal closure should remain in effect longer than proposed. Three respondents expressed that they had no opinion on the proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. In 2016, opening most rivers and streams to year-round angling in the Central Fishing District expanded many fishing opportunities. This change was made with the understanding that evaluations of the new regulation might require reinstating seasonal fishing restrictions on a case by case basis, if information suggested this action would be prudent to conserve particular fisheries. FWP investigations of Hebgen Reservoir, including microchemistry evaluations, studies using tetracycline marking, and fin erosion examinations, now confirm that wild reproduction of Rainbow Trout contributes most (over 80%) of the Rainbow Trout in Hebgen Reservoir. We also know that several Hebgen Lake tributaries are especially important to wild fish recruitment to the reservoir. The South Fork Madison River is one of these tributaries. On the basis of all this information, establishing seasonal protections for spawning Rainbow Trout for this tributary seems prudent at this time.

Proposal 9- Reduce Cutthroat Trout limit for Red Rock Creek (Beaverhead River drainage). [Survey ref: Q12]

See p. 73, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

Red Rock Creek (Beaverhead River drainage)

Open entire year except May 15 through June 14.

~~Cutthroat Trout: 20 daily and in possession.~~

Cutthroat Trout: 5 daily and in possession, no size limit.

Public Comment (8 total). Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 16 survey responses to this proposal, including two that were expanded with additional written comments. We received no other comments. Eleven respondents supported the proposal without further elaboration. One respondent opposed the proposal expressing confusion about the

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recommendation and irritation with FWP. Four respondents expressed that they had no opinion on the proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. For the past four years, FWP and the USFWS National Refuge have been suppressing hybridized Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT) in Red Rock Creek to determine if YCT abundance was harming Arctic Grayling. Historically the harvest regulation had been liberalized to 20 fish daily and in possession, to help reduce the population of YCT in the Red Rock Lakes system. After four years of suppression, it doesn't appear that YCT have a large influence on Arctic Grayling abundance. The proposed reduction in YCT harvest limit this year, to 5 fish daily and in possession, re-establishes a more conservative harvest limit for YCT as suppression of YCT is discontinued and as the next phase of investigations to understand limiting factors for Arctic Grayling are initiated.

Proposal 10- Modify Hellroaring Creek fishing regulations for clarity and to conform to previous changes in the Central Fishing District. [Survey ref: Q13]

See page 66, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

HELLROARING CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)

Cutthroat Trout: 3 daily and in possession, ~~none over 12~~ *only one over 14* inches.

Public Comment (15 total). Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 15 survey responses to this proposal, including one that was expanded with an additional written comment. We received no other comments. Nine respondents supported the proposal without further elaboration. Six respondents expressed that they had no opinion on the proposal, one adding that he "Don't give a rip".

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. This change is recommended to help bring the Hellroaring Creek trout regulation exception into conformity with other exceptions in the Central District. This change helps clarify the intention to standardize Central Fishing District trout regulations exceptions whenever possible and appropriate.

CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 4

Proposal 11- Eliminate Priest Butte Lake fishing season exception. [Survey ref: Q14]

See p. 73, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

~~PRIEST BUTTE LAKE~~

~~Open June 15 through September 15.~~

Note: New language is in colored *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by ~~strikethrough~~. Page numbers refer to the **2016 Montana Fishing Regulations** booklet.

~~Open December 1 through the end of February.~~

Public Comment (14 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 14 survey responses to this proposal, including one that was expanded with an additional written comment. We received no other comments. Six respondents supported the proposal; one opposed it without further elaboration. Seven respondents expressed that they had no opinion on the proposal, one of whom stated they “could not care less”.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. The seasonal closure at Priest Butte Lake no longer has fisheries management relevancy. Eliminating the exception removes an unneeded restriction on angling opportunity.

CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 5

Proposal 12- Modify Slough Creek fishing regulations for clarity and to conform to previous changes in the Central Fishing District. [Survey ref: Q15]

See page 74, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

SLOUGH CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)

Cutthroat Trout: 3 daily and in possession, ~~none over 12~~ **only one over 14** inches.

Public Comment (17 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 17 survey responses to this proposal, including four that were expanded with additional written comments. Eight respondents supported the proposal without further elaboration. Four respondents opposed the proposal suggesting alternative fishing regulations for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, or that we wait to learn more from the 2016 fish kill on the Yellowstone River before making any changes. Five respondents expressed that they had no opinion on the proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. This change is recommended to help bring the Slough Creek trout regulation exception into conformity with other exceptions in the Central District. This change helps clarify the intention to standardize Central Fishing District trout regulations exceptions whenever possible and appropriate.

Proposal 13-Modify Soda Butte Creek fishing regulations for clarity and to conform to previous changes in the Central Fishing District. [Survey ref: Q16]

See page 74, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

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SODA BUTTE CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)

Cutthroat Trout: 3 daily and in possession, ~~none over 12~~ *only one over 14* inches.

Public Comment (17 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 17 survey responses to this proposal, including five that were elaborated by additional written comments. We received no other comments. Eight respondents supported the proposal without further elaboration. Five respondents opposed the proposal, recommending different fishing regulations for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in 2017, or that we wait to learn more from the 2016 fish kill on the Yellowstone River before making any changes. Four respondents expressed that they had no opinion concerning the proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. This change is recommended to help bring the Soda Butte Creek trout regulation exception into conformity with other exceptions in the Central District. This change helps clarify the intention to standardize Central Fishing District trout regulations exceptions whenever possible and appropriate.

Proposal 14- Modify Yellowstone River Tributaries to eliminate the Buffalo Fork Cutthroat Trout exception, and to adjust the Hellroaring Creek, Slough Creek, and Soda Butte Creek trout regulations to conform to previous changes in the Central Fishing District. [Survey ref: Q17]

See page 76, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

YELLOWSTONE RIVER TRIBUTARIES

~~Buffalo Fork,~~ Hellroaring, Slough and Soda Butte creeks upstream from YNP boundary

Cutthroat Trout: 3 daily and in possession, ~~none over 12~~ *only one over 14* inches.

All tributaries between YNP Boundary and Pine Creek Bridge

Catch-and-release for Cutthroat Trout.

All tributaries downstream from Springdale

Combined trout: All may be Cutthroat Trout (unless indicated otherwise in tributary exceptions).

Public Comment (16 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 16 survey responses to this proposal, including four that were elaborated by additional written comments. We received no other comments. Eight respondents supported the proposal without further elaboration. Five respondents opposed the proposal, suggesting alternative fishing regulations for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, or that we wait to learn more from the 2016 fish kill on the Yellowstone River before making any changes. Three respondents expressed that they had no opinion concerning the proposal.

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Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. This change is recommended to help bring the Hellroaring Creek, Slough Creek, and Soda Butte Creek trout regulation exceptions into conformity with other exceptions in the Central District. This change helps clarify the intention to standardize Central Fishing District trout regulations exceptions whenever possible and appropriate. The Buffalo Creek Cutthroat Trout regulation exception is eliminated because it is not relevant; the stream supports a Rainbow Trout fishery.

EASTERN DISTRICT – Region 7

Proposal 15- Modify Yellowstone River Paddlefish Regulation at Intake Diversion Dam to clarify that Paddlefish season may end before June 30, and that fishing from a boat/vessel is allowed again after the Paddlefish season closes. [Survey ref: Q18]

See pages 87 and 93, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

P.87

Intake Diversion Dam to about 1/4 mile downstream as posted (Yellow Tag)

~~Closed May 15 through June 30 to fishing or snagging from boats/vessels.~~

Closed to fishing, snagging, or landing Paddlefish from boats/vessels during the open Paddlefish Season (May 15 through June 30, or earlier as posted on site).

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Intake Diversion Dam to about 1/4 mile downstream as posted

~~Closed May 15 through June 30 to fishing or snagging from boats/vessels.~~

Closed to fishing, snagging, or landing Paddlefish from boats/vessels during the open Paddlefish Season (May 15 through June 30, or earlier as posted on site).

Snagging: It is illegal to snag for fish other than Paddlefish.

Public Comment (16 total): Between August 12 and September 12, 2016, we received 16 survey responses to this proposal, including one that was elaborated with an additional written comment. We received no other comments. Ten respondents supported the proposal without further elaboration. One respondent opposed the proposal expressing dislike of snagging in general. Five respondents expressed that they had no opinion on this proposal.

Final Proposal (rationale and recommendation): Approve as proposed.

Based on further internal discussion, and incorporating public comment, we recommend this regulation be adopted as initially proposed. The Paddlefish season on the Yellowstone River often closes before June 30 as harvest quotas are reached earlier than that date in most years. This regulation change is intended to more clearly express the prohibition of fishing from boats during the open Paddlefish season, that the Paddlefish season may close before June 30 (in which case

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the closure will be posted), and that fishing from boats is again allowed at the Intake Diversion Access Site after the Paddlefish season ends.

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