

**FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
WINTER 2021 FUNDING CYCLE
Decision Notice and Response to Public Comment**

Prepared by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
May 1, 2021

Proposal and Final Action

The FFIP was established in 1995 to establish and implement a statewide voluntary program that promotes fishery habitats and spawning areas for the rivers, streams, and lakes of Montana's fisheries in order to enhance future fisheries through natural reproduction (87-1-272, MCA). Members of the Future Fisheries Review Panel submitted funding recommendations for seven proposed projects from the Winter 2021 funding cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program (FFIP) to the Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission (Commission) for final approval. The Future Fisheries Review Panel is an independent board appointed by the governor (87-1-273, MCA). As a final action, the Commission approved all the funding recommendations, as submitted by the Future Fisheries Review Panel, at their public meeting held in Helena on February 4, 2021.

Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

MEPA requires Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to assess the potential consequences of the proposed action for the human and natural environment. Environmental Assessments (EA's) were prepared and released by FWP on April 1, 2021 for two individual proposed projects associated with the Winter 2020 Future Fisheries funding cycle. The remaining five projects funded by the Commission approval fell either the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), or external Environmental Assessment processes initiated by the project applicant. The 30-day public comment period ended May 1, 2021. These proposed projects included:

1. East Fork Bitterroot River riparian revegetation (Ravalli Co.)
2. South Fork Lower Willow Creek fish passage (Granite Co.)

Public Comment

Comment 1, Jim Dismore (support of the South Fork Lower Willow Creek project):

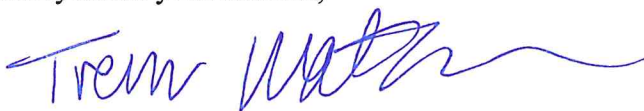
I own the land along Lower Willow Creek from the reservoir up to land owned by the open cross ranch. Over the past few years there has been a dramatic downturn in the number of fish in our stretch of the creek. I am very much in favor of the project at the head of the Conn ditch.

Response: Thank you for the support.

Decision Notice

The public comment period closed on the two projects above and one comment was received. Based on the EAs' disclosures and analyses of potential impacts, FWP concludes that the proposed actions will not result in any significant impacts. For these projects, FWP will adopt the draft EA as the final EA and proceed with the projects as planned. Copies of the final EA's are available upon request.

Thank you for your interest,



Trevor Watson
Fish Habitat Bureau Chief, Fisheries Division
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks