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April 5, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee members

FROM: Kerry Berg

SUBJECT: Presentation from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

BACKGROUND:

Presenters: Matt Boyer, Fisheries Mitigation Coordinator, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Sam Bourret, Hungry Horse Mitigation Fish Biologist, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Summary: Matt Boyer and Sam Bourret will update the Committee on the use of otolith microchemistry to identify source(s) of illegal walleye introductions in Western Montana.

Relevance: The Fish and Wildlife Program supports preventing the introduction of non-native and invasive species in the Columbia River Basin and detecting the presence of these species early and responding rapidly.

Background: Recently it was confirmed that walleye were illegally transplanted in Swan Lake in Northwest Montana. This recent case is problematic because walleye are highly predacious and could impact the native bull trout population, as well as the kokanee salmon fishery in Swan Lake. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) estimates nearly 600 illegal introductions have occurred in 250 bodies of waters in the state, and roughly half of those incidents were in Northwest Montana. For this and other information see a recent article at <http://flatheadbeacon.com/2016/02/16/swan-lake-walleye-were-introduced/> .

MFWP will update the Committee on the use of otolith microchemistry to identify source(s) of illegal walleye introductions in Western Montana. Matt Boyer will provide a brief overview of how this tool can be applied to address critical uncertainties and emerging priorities within the Fish and Wildlife Program and some of the opportunities this work may present for regional coordination among project sponsors. Sam Bourret will then discuss how we are currently applying this tool to scientifically investigate the source water body of the recent illegal walleye introduction in Swan Lake.