

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 AN
emergency rule closing a portion of) EMERGENCY RULE
the Kootenai River in Lincoln 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 closing a portion of the Kootenai River:

- (a) A wildland fire, approximately 3.5 miles up Highway 37 outside of Libby.
- (b) Fire suppression efforts which include helicopters bucketing water from the river.
- (c) The closure is necessary so helicopter crews can safely operate and maneuver without potential collisions with recreationists on the lake. The closure is also necessary so recreationists, including those with limited maneuverability, are not subject to potential collision with large, heavy water buckets suspended from helicopters.
- (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 closure will be posted at access points. The rule will be sent to interested parties, and published as an emergency rule in Issue No. 15 of the 2018 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 August 24, 2018, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact Kaedy Gangstad, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701; telephone (406) 444-4594; or e-mail kgangstad@mt.gov.

3. The emergency rule is effective July 20, 2018, when this rule notice is filed with the Secretary of State.

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

NEW RULE I KOOTENAI RIVER EMERGENCY CLOSURE (1) The Kootenai River is located in Lincoln County.

(2) The Kootenai River is closed from Osprey Landing boat ramp to the Highway 37 bridge city boat ramp in Libby to all public occupation and recreation including, but not limited to, floating, swimming, wading, and boating.

(3) This rule is effective as long as the lake is needed as a source of water for fire suppression efforts. This will depend on the extent and duration of the fire in the area. Posted signs regarding the emergency closure 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 as 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: Jessica Snyder, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT, 59602-0701; e-mail jesssnyder@mt.gov. Any comments must be received no later than September 7, 2018.

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.

/s/ Martha Williams

Martha Williams

Director

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

/s/ Zach Zipfel

Zach Zipfel

Rule Reviewer

Certified to the Secretary of State July 20, 2018.