

Environmental Quality Council review under HB 142
Boating Advisory Council as codified in 23-2-536, MCA.

Purpose: Advise the Department on the expenditure of funds in the motorboat account in the state special revenue fund.

Makeup: Composed of at least five members of the public, each of whom must be interested in boating activities and the use of public boating facilities.

Discussion: The Boating Advisory Council (BAC) had been in-place from approximately 1993 through 2005. This committee has not met since 2006. The BAC typically met once per year to discuss and make recommendations on the proposed allocation (or reallocation) of funds for specific boating related projects statewide.

Funds appropriated to Montana State Parks have ranged from \$225,000-to-\$450,000 each biennium for the past several Legislative Sessions. These funds are typically utilized for projects such as dock replacements, latrines that serve motorboat users, safety buoys, and similar efforts at Montana State Park managed boating sites.

Agency observation: Historically, the agency limited the use of the BAC and public participation was lukewarm. In 2006, no further meetings were held and the BAC has not reconvened.

There is a greater role for the Boating Advisory Council beyond advising the agency on expenditures should the Legislature desire. Consistent with HJR 32 recommendations put forth by the department, the scope and purpose of the BAC could include making recommendations resulting from review of boating issues and trends such as accidents, demand, supply, safety, condition of facilities and user conflicts statewide as part of improving tourism and recreation overall on federal, state, and local recreation sites including places like Canyon Ferry, Fort Peck, or Flathead Lake. The committee could be made up of industry representatives, agency staff and general citizens who make recommendations to the division or department on improving management and recreation overall in a more strategic manner.

Alternatives for consideration:

- A) Do nothing. This will restart use of the Boating Advisory Council.
- B) Repeal statute. The Executive or the agency could reestablish the advisory council without statutory guidance under MCA 2-15-122 if the need was present.
- C) Amend the statute to expand the scope and purpose of the Boating Advisory Council to deal with a wider array of boating issues or the entire parks division.