



# The **FOAMLINE**

VOL. 24, #1

FISHING OUTFITTERS ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA  
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MARCH 2015

## **37th ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN BOZEMAN**

### *By-law change, Boat Sticker Discussion, Other Topics*

Our annual membership meeting on Saturday, March 14th featured an election update to our by-laws, boat sticker suggestions for the Board of Outfitters, "How to market your business with only a cellphone," some fish science and other topics, lunch provided by McKenzie River pizza, afternoon beer from Outlaw Brewery, and another successful raffle. Here's a brief rundown:

Executive Director Robin Cunningham asked members to update our by-laws to break ties in director elections by a vote of the Board of Directors. After a brief discussion, members attending agreed that this was a suitable solution, went on to move adoption of the idea, and agreed unanimously.

Steve Gallus, new Executive Officer for the Board of Outfitters (MBO) introduced himself, then talked briefly about the new "Watercraft ID" rule passed by the MBO. It allows only one set of stickers per licensee during renewal to keep the sticker inventory viable so everyone renewing gets a set, then allowing members to request replacement sets if they lose a set. Members asked why they couldn't have several sets at renewal, and Gallus reminded them that the rule allows only one set per licensee and that stickers should remain removable so they could be displayed on any boat while in service.

Gallus went on to ask about possible changes to the boat sticker rule, including issuing two sets per licensee every three or so years, having the stickers blank and requiring the licensee to fill in their number and keep it legible, then sending annually only a year sticker like those used on license plates. Members wondered why we needed an annual tag. Others asked why we couldn't simply download, print our own stickers like we do our licenses, then laminate them for display. Many asked why we couldn't simply mount our stickers on any number of boats, then cover them up when we're not working.

With these ideas in mind, Gallus and Cunningham agreed to develop with the MBO some simpler, more useful boat sticker rules for the future, such as allowing several sets of blank stickers per year, no annual date tags, letting licensees affix the stickers to boats, and, if possible, using downloadable paper tags as temporary replacements while waiting for actual stickers in the mail. Stay tuned for updates.

FOAM director Mark Raisler (Region 3, Missouri) took members through a social media "how to" lesson, showing that immediate, on-the-water updates via cellphone to Facebook or Twitter can get the word out to your clients. Adding video, text messages, and such make it a new world of reminding your clients

what's new with your service, how your river(s) are doing, and anything else to keep their interest in your business.

Jim Olson, FWP biologist, discussed the recent fish fungus outbreak on the Big Hole, Mike Bias of the Big Hole Foundation talked about the two-year fish tagging program on the Big Hole, our insurance agent, Art Hoffart, brought us up to date on the latest insurance coverages available to FOAM, and Greater Yellowstone Coalition representative Charles Drimal introduced members to the "Montanans for Healthy Rivers" movement to recommend some candidate waters for Wild and Scenic river designation in Montana.

Last, directors and E.D. Cunningham suggested conducting - and members agreed to - a survey regarding our industry's economic impact based on individual income and expenses in a variety of business areas. The survey will be modeled on the Institute of Recreation Research from the U of Montana survey conducted in 2007, with all information kept completely confidential; in fact, we don't want any personal info at all, because the data we seek is aimed solely to show how the industry is trending as a whole. Look for the survey notification in your email during April and help the association by participating. We'll publish the results about a month after the survey ends.

NOTE: special thanks to FOAM board member Phil Sgamma for arranging the food and beverages.

## **NEW FISHING OUTFITTER QUALIFICATIONS**

### *FOAM, MBO Proposes New Experience Requirements*

Based on the results of our March, 2014, membership survey indicating 86% of responding members favored increased experience for a fishing outfitter license, FOAM directors proposed new experience requirements at the MBO meeting on March 6. FOAM directors Matt Greemore, Mark Raisler, and Jason Brininstool presented and defended FOAM's recent proposal to replace the current 100 days experience requirement with the following:

- 1) 3 years providing services as a fishing guide,
- 2) A minimum of 120 days experience,
- 3) A 50-day limit on experience waivers, and
- 4) Rule implementation after January 1, 2016.

Experiencing three years of changing water levels and weather conditions while actively guiding clients on multiple rivers - or even one water body - is the key one-time practical outfitter qualification standard that promotes public protection. Likewise, adding 20 days to the current qualification is a reasonable increase in actual experience, and curbing waivers at 50 days guarantees a barely acceptable minimum of 70 days experience. Delaying the implementation date until early 2016 should allow those guides in

the middle of applying or thinking of applying for a fishing outfitter license enough time to complete that process before the new rule is in place.

The MBO agreed, voting 5 to 2 in favor of the new proposed rules and moving them for vetting by a department rule reviewer before being sent out for comments. FOAM will let members know the comment period timing and contact info.

Many thanks to those members who wrote the board in support of the proposal before the March MBO meeting. Continued member support during the comment period will ensure our industry responsibly qualifies professional outfitters who protect our clients in all conditions and circumstances while providing quality fishing services now and in the future.

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## NEW SOFTWARE COMBO AIDS OUTFITTERS

### *'GuidePool' Calendars Trips, Creates Reports*

A couple of Missoulians have teamed up with a New Yorker to create a trip-scheduling and report-generating software package named GuidePool. This crew premiered the system during our annual meeting, took questions, explained the in's and out's of the process, and subscribed members for the system.

Here's how the system programmer, Harry Ward, describes the package: "GuidePool is a web-based software solution built to automate year end reporting (SRP reports, Client Logs, and RUP's) for outfitters, making December fun again. GuidePool manages all calendars and trip requests for both guides and outfitters."

GuidePool is free for guides and outfitters can sign up for only \$2/trip or \$29/month. To sign up, visit <http://guidepool.io>. For demos, call 406.552.1358 or go to <http://goo.gl/wZtpm> for a demo video.

Of course, each outfitter should decide for themselves if this system works for them, keeping in mind ease of use, applicability to their own operation, and security of data.

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## IC STATUS: IMPORTANT INDUSTRY TOOL

### *Independent Contractship Benefits Members*

Independent contractors are independently-established business owners generally exempt from Workers Compensation coverage requirements.

IC status for guides provides multiple benefits, including simplified bookkeeping for outfitters, a pool of qualified guides for outfitters to choose from, either annually or in a pinch, and a guide's ability to reduce taxes via legitimate business expenses

they could not take as employees and getting more trips through multiple outfitters.

Take note: Recent audits by the Independent Contractor Central Unit (ICCU) have shown not all non-employee guides have IC status, possibly subjecting outfitters to penalties if they mistakenly assume a guide has IC status. It's a simple matter of requesting a copy of the guide's Independent Contractor Exemption Certificate (ICEC). And, since FOAM recommends individual liability insurance as a popular factor in proving independently established business status, outfitter members should also see if the guide has insurance and request a copy insurance certificate.

Sole proprietor outfitters working away from a fixed place of business, ie. on the water, should also qualify for IC status if they want to work for another outfitter as a guide. However, corporate officers and managers of manager-managed membership partnerships are mainly exempt from work comp requirements. If you have questions, check our website FAQ page ([foam-mt.org/faq.php](http://foam-mt.org/faq.php)) for IC discussions or call FOAM at 406.763.5436 for more details.

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## SAFETY CONCERNS FROM A TRAVELER

### *FOAM Hears From Anxious Motorist*

On the morning of Tuesday, 9/23/14, a traveler driving upstream along the lower Madison on Greycliff road a mile or so short of Black's Ford came around a blind corner and almost collided with what he called a "train" of some eight or so trucks and truck-and-trailer-boat combos speeding along nose-to-tail in the middle of the road. When he called the FOAM offices last week - yes, 7 months later - the caller couldn't remember if the boats had our red-and-white tags, but wanted to urge those involved, if they were guides, to be more careful on backroads.

This was a rare call, and while this incident may inaccurately suggest FOAM members were involved, we should always act responsibly while providing services, even en route to the water - One more way to be professional.

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## CLASSIFIED ADS

### **BLUE RIBBON CAMPS AND SHUTTLE**

Lower Madison, Gallatin, Jefferson, and Yellowstone River shuttles. Permanent wall tent camp set-up on 9th St. island with meals in Livingston. We can tow your boat, set-up and tear down camps, whatever you need to keep fishing. Call Jimmy Briggs at 406.581.0391 or email [blueribbonshuttle@gmail.com](mailto:blueribbonshuttle@gmail.com) or on Facebook at "Blue Ribbon Camps and Shuttle."

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## BOARD of DIRECTORS

**Region 1** (Kootenai, Flathead)  
Matt DiPaulo  
837-0918

**Region 2** (Bitterroot, Clark Fork)  
Russell Parks  
546-6305

**Region 3** (Missouri)  
Mark Raisler  
459-8739

**Region 4** (Big Hole, B'head)  
Matt Greemore  
684-5639

**Region 5** (Madison )  
Phil Sgamma  
539-4239

**Region 6** (Gallatin)  
Dave McKee  
582-0980

**Region 7** (Yellowstone)  
Brant Oswald  
223-2047

**Region 8** (Bighorn, Ft. Peck)  
Matt McMeans  
666-2326

**Guide-at-Large Director** Jason Brininstool 370-8029