



# The FOAMLINE

VOL. 15, #3

FISHING OUTFITTERS ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA  
406.763.5436 info@foam-montana.org www.foam-montana.org

FALL 2006

## BACK KINSEY FOR OUTFITTER BOARD SEAT

### *Governor to Appoint Fishing Outfitter After Oct. 1*

As noted in the summer FOAMLINE, Governor Schweitzer will be appointing a new fishing outfitter to the Board of Outfitters this fall. The current three-year term expires on October 1, though this administration's appointments have been running late, so you still have time to support FOAM's President Lee Kinsey of Livingston for the open seat.

You can individually recommend Lee for this position in a couple of ways. Online, go to [www.governor.mt.gov](http://www.governor.mt.gov) and click for the 'Boards & Councils' link at the top of the page, then use the 'Appointment Nomination' link to recommend Lee. Lee's address: 326 S. 13th St., Livingston, MT 59047 - phone: 222-4494. Add a few reasons why you'd like to have Lee represent us, and you're done.

You can also mail a recommendation to: Governor Brian A. Schweitzer, Attn: Patty Keebler, State Capitol, Helena MT 59620-0801, Fax 406-444-5529, or call 406-444-3862, ask for Patty Keebler, and leave a message. Please help place a responsible fishing outfitter representative on the Board of Outfitters. Thanks.

## FOAM COMMENTS SUBMITTED FOR FWP'S PROPOSED COMMERCIAL USE RULES, FEES

### *Recommend Change in Fees, Clarification of Certain Rules*

Our association submitted final comments and recommendations regarding FWP's proposed commercial use rules on Monday, Sept. 11, just before the comment deadline expired. FOAM generally supported the concept of commercial use fees since association members attending our annual meeting last spring agreed in principle to back the rules. However, FOAM recommended a few changes in technical aspects of the rule language and promoted equal fees for outfitters and guides.

The rules are intended to cover all aspects of commercial use from outfitters and guides using fishing access sites (FAS) to film crews making movies on FWP ground to building contractors using FAS to move materials to island homesites. Comments focused on use of FAS, how much we should pay to use FAS statewide, and where the money should be spent.

Specifically, FOAM argued that use permits should be issued to individual persons rather than legal entities or businesses. To quote the comments, "Outfitter operations must have an individual person holding a license in order to advertise, solicit clients, set terms and conditions of service, set and collect fees, and generally operate as an outfitter. If the department issued permits to an entity or business, in order to comply with outfitter statutes and rules, the entity or business would have to hire or contract with an outfitter to

accomplish the above-listed duties. However, these activities are specifically prohibited in New Rule V(7). Such conflicting and contrary language will either deny a permittee access to fishing outfitting operations or force a licensed outfitter to violate this new rule."

(Note: New Rule V(7) states, "A commercial use permit and any associated units of use may only be used by the holder of the permit. The permit holder may hire or contract persons to provide authorized services provided that said persons do not recruit clients, make agreements with clients concerning monetary consideration or services provided, collect fees from clients, or advertise any business other than the permitted business when conducting the permitted use.")

Think about this scenario: A business obtains a Commercial Use permit, then contracts or hires an outfitter to provide fishing services. Under New Rule V(7), the outfitter cannot recruit clients, set fees, set services, take money, or advertise - the very things the outfitter is licensed to do! How will the business survive? More to the point, why give a permit to a business?

The language in New Rule V(7) is taken directly from the Beaverhead, Big Hole Rules, where it is intended to prohibit renting or use of allocated days by anyone but the permit holder and to stall unlicensed outfitting by guides. But, in this commercial use rule, such language is a mistake.

FOAM has asked that FWP exempt fishing outfitters from this portion of the rule or add language to ensure that commercial use permits for fishing operations be issued only to a person who is licensed as an outfitter and subject to outfitter laws and rules. If the department wants to offer these permits to, say, a whitewater business, that's fine, but we wonder how FWP will discipline a corporation or LLC for permit violations short of revoking the permit.

### FEES

FOAM directors recommended a single \$75 fee for both outfitters and guides for the Fishing Access Site Permit that allows fishing operations to use all FAS on non-restricted rivers statewide. The directors thought that guides and outfitters who use FAS should be subject to an equal fee since both leave the same 'footprint' with their truck-and-trailer combos and both make money from use of the site.

Charlie Sperry, FWP's River Management Coordinator, suggested that a FAS Permit will be required of all fishing outfitters since they 'make money on the site,' either directly from guiding clients themselves or hiring or contracting guides to provide the same services with a fee being returned to the outfitter. FOAM wondered if such 'indirect' commercial income would apply to, for instance, rental boat or fishing equipment operations, since they,

too, are not at the site, but are still making money from people using the site to access the fishing they need the boat or gear for.

Under the proposed Fee Rule, separate Restricted Use Permit fees apply to those waterbodies that are “regulated by special department rules governing commercial or public use, such as rules that restrict timing, location, amount, or type of use that occurs. Restricted water body also means a body of water that is cooperatively managed with another agency.” Fees charged for such permits may be 3% of gross income before expenses, similar to the USFS permit fees, or \$5 per client day, with a minimum annual fee for water-based outfitters of \$90.

FOAM argued that this minimum annual fee be charged for any and all permits issued within an FWP region, not for each individual restricted waterbody. Our idea follows the USFS model of setting a single minimum fee for all waterbodies within a certain forest, like the Gallatin National Forest. We don’t want to pay a minimum fee for both the Beaverhead and Big Hole, nor for the Madison AND the Beaverhead and Big Hole, since the Madison will eventually be cooperatively managed by FWP and the BLM (See article later in FOAMLINE).

We also asked that the department consider an adjusted minimum fee based on actual use for those outfitters allocated less than 9 river days on the Beaverhead or Big Hole rivers, figuring members didn’t want to pay a minimum fee that’s more than they would be charged on an per-client basis.

FOAM E.D. Robin Cunningham sent in individual comments as an outfitter asking the commission to adopt a policy that would ‘earmark’ revenues from the statewide FAS permits to pay for FAS acquisition and maintenance and spend revenues from Restricted Use Permits on administration of the permits.

The FWP Commissioners will review all comments and decide what rules and what specific language to adopt at their December 14th commission meeting in Helena.

## COMMERCIAL RULES & SMITH RIVER USE

### *Permit Transfer May Change with Commercial Use Rules*

As a restricted river, the Smith falls under the jurisdiction of the proposed commercial use rules and fees. A separate Smith River Special Use Area Rule is currently out for public comment and may be downloaded at [http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/notice\\_1196.aspx](http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/notice_1196.aspx)

Option 1 of the Smith fee rule proposal makes only editorial changes to current rules, which allow temporary transfer or trades of launches within the group of currently authorized outfitters, though current rule prohibits sub-letting, leasing, sub-contracting, or other transfers of allocated launches to outfitters,

companies, guides, or individuals not authorized by FWP.

But, the proposed Smith fee rule may include restrictions on how permits are used and transferred. For example, Option 2, based on the new commercial use rule proposal, says that a Smith river outfitter must sell their business in its entirety in order to transfer any allocated launches to a new owner, and they must transfer all launches to that owner. Also, a Smith river outfitter could not charge for the temporary exchange of launches to another outfitter authorized to operate on the river. But, a Smith outfitter could “hire or contract guides or outfitters acting as guides to provide the authorized services provided that said person does not recruit clients, make agreements with clients concerning monetary consideration or services provided, collect fees from clients, or advertise any business other than the permitted business when conducting the permitted use.” Equally important, “The permit holder is responsible for ensuring that the hired or contracted guides comply with the terms of the permit.” Lastly, the rule also states “The outfitter peak season is defined as a six-week period beginning the 4th Sunday in May,” and “The department is authorized to waive the launch fee and related fees on a maximum of two (2) outfitter launches each season on a case-by-case basis. This provision is authorized to accommodate outfitters who choose to donate one or more launches to a recognized charitable or not-for-profit event. No additional outfitter floats are authorized for the Smith River program under this provision.”

No rearranging the current allocation scheme is mentioned in either option except to note that there are now 10, not 12, authorized Smith river outfitters, and that “the Department is authorized to update (the list of authorized outfitters) on an annual basis to reflect any approved permit transfers or launch allocations.” Curiously, though, the FWP website states that the new proposed Smith fee rule “also adds two options for allocating outfitter launches. The final allocation process will be based on the FWP Commission’s December ruling on commercial use on FWP administered lands.” FOAM assumes this allocation language refers to the updating of the authorized outfitter list, finding no other allocation language in the document available online from FWP.

The deadline for comments on the Smith River Special Use Area Rule is Friday, November 10th, 2006. For more information, contact:

Tom Reilly  
1420 E. Sixth Ave  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
treilly@mt.gov

## BOARD of DIRECTORS

**Region 1** (Kootenai, Flathead)  
Jim Voeller  
862-3448

**Region 3** (Missouri)  
Pat Straub  
495-0487

**Region 5** (Madison)  
Joe Dilschneider  
682-5356

**Region 7** (Yellowstone)  
Lee Kinsey  
222-4494

**Region 2** (Bitterroot, Clark Fork)  
Jack Mauer  
642-6548

**Region 4** (Big Hole, B’head)  
Tim Tollett  
683-5276

**Region 6** (Gallatin)  
Steve Summerhill  
586-5373

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

**Guide-at-Large Director** Chris Fleck 322-0202

Send comments via email to [treilly@mt.gov](mailto:treilly@mt.gov) or by regular mail to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Parks Division  
1420 E.Sixth Ave.  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

## **MADISON IN LINE FOR RIVER MANAGEMENT**

### *BLM, FWP Cooperating on Madison; Yellowstone Next?*

The BLM is preparing to apply the federal Special Recreation Permit (SRP) process on the Madison river. Tim Bozorth, BLM Field Manager for the Dillon BLM District, outlined a few details of the process at the BLM's Western Resource Advisory Council (WRAC) meeting in Dillon recently.

Bozorth explained that he's been waiting for FWP to complete its Commercial Rules process before starting the SRP process on the Madison. Those FOAM members who were subject to the SRP process on the Blackfoot will know that the feds are mandated to charge fees for commercial activities conducted on their ground, and that, typically, the feds require some minimum payment and a fee of 3% of gross proceeds before expenses. Bozorth noted these requirements, but Pat Flowers, FWP Region 3 Director said he and Bozorth were working together on a cooperative management process for the Madison, including hiring an FWP employee to administer all FWP and BLM FAS on the Madison and collect fees from commercial entities who operate on either FWP or BLM ground.

Neither Bozorth nor Flowers talked about details like flat per-client fees or minimum fee payments. All this will be worked out after the FWP Commission adopts the final Commercial Use Rules and an associated Fee Rule. FOAM will track this closely, since the Madison is the most popular and heavily used river in Montana and supports the business needs of many FOAM members. Expect the SRP process to be started in 2007 and fully in place by 2008. At this time, no allocations are contemplated.

Flowers also mentioned that FWP's River Management Process may be started on the Madison due to requests by several land owners, including Roger Lang of the Sun West Ranch and Craig Matthews, owner of Blue Ribbon Flies in W. Yellowstone. In an interview, Craig said he was concerned about commercial boat and walk-wade conflicts on the upper Madison around 3-Mile Bridge and the Slide Inn areas, as well as nonresident outfitters and additional pressure during the 'shoulder seasons'.

Gardner residents have also asked for some kind of management on the upper Yellowstone, mostly focused on white-water rafters, fishing operations, and walk-wade anglers. Flowers said he would go slow on any river management plans for the Yellowstone. Stay tuned for details.

## **BIGHORN WATER LEVELS THREATENED**

### *Wyoming Residents Want Bighorn Lake Level Raised*

Wyoming citizens around Lovell are asking the Bureau of Reclamation to reduce minimum flows from Bighorn Lake in order

to keep their marinas and lake-side concessions profitable. FWP Region 5, FWP Commissioner Shane Colton, Bighorn biologists, outfitters and Billings anglers have joined forces to oppose these demands and are looking for wider support.

Doug Haacke of the Billings Rod & Gun Club and Mike Whittington of the Wildlife Federation have been keeping FOAM in the information loop about this issue. Here's the basic picture: Wyoming residents in the Bighorn Lake area were apparently promised all kinds of reservoir-driven economic benefits when the original Yellowtail Dam proposal was introduced back in the 1960's, and now, in spite of common drought issues throughout Wyoming and Montana alike, they feel that the Bureau of Reclamation should reduce flows out of the lake into the Bighorn river in order to keep water in the lake to support their projected economic expectations rather than the needs of the Bighorn fishery.

Even though an estimated \$33 million is generated by the Bighorn river, its fishery and recreation and tourism industries, Wyoming folks reject the idea of maintaining a minimum flow of some 1500 cubic feet per second (cfs) to keep the Bighorn fish alive and reproducing. They ask for much reduced flows around 600 cfs or less in order to keep enough water in Bighorn Lake to float their boats and support their marinas.

Apparently, Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal and National Park Service superintendent Darrell Cook are in support of the reduced Bighorn flows, but FWP is adamant that the fishery must be maintained with the 1500 cfs flows all year 'round.

If you'd like to know more about the situation, please attend an informal informational meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 2 at FWP Headquarters, 2300 Lake Elmo Drive, Billings. Call (406) 247-2940 for more information or driving directions. FOAM will have a representative there to learn more and report to the FOAM board at their next meeting.

## **RIVER CLOSURE POLICY QUESTIONED**

### *FOAM Members Wonder about Closure Triggers, Policy*

When water temperatures rose and streamflows dropped on several popular rivers, FOAM members who were subject to river closures wondered about what triggered the decision to close their local waters and what FOAM could find out about FWP's river closure policy.

Missoula outfitter Joe Cummings asked his local FWP biologist Pat Saffel what triggered the long-time closure of the Clark Fork and learned that three days of water temperatures over 72 degrees were the cause. OK, said Joe, what triggers dropping the closure? Saffel noted that a simple daily change of water temperature wouldn't open the river, but rather that long-term temperature trends would lead to that decision.

At the FWP Commission meeting in Missoula on August 3, the commissioners questioned FWP Fishery Division Administrator Chris Hunter about the closure policy. Hunter explained that for the past four years, previous commission members delegated closure authority to FWP's Director, currently Jeff Hagener, and the commissioner of the region where the waterbody was located. Hunter mentioned discussion about putting the closure procedure

in an ARM (Amended Rules of Montana) rule process to make this emergency delegation authority permanent rather than an annual commission decision.

Various commissioners asked about specific aspects of having the policy and procedure in a rule, wondering, for example, what would happen if the regional commissioner didn't agree with the department's recommendation to close a waterbody, or asking exactly how long public notice needed to be in place before closing a waterbody - that's 12 hours, according to FWP Legal Council Bob Lane. Most commissioners agreed that voluntary closures don't work and should be replaced by mandatory closures. In the end, the Commission voted to delegate authority for emergency closure during the 2006 season to the Director and regional commissioner, with another commissioner replacing an absent regional commissioner. Hunter noted that a commission motion from the past directing FWP fish managers to drop voluntary closures was now department policy.

All this discussion leaves open the possibility of rule-making for the entire emergency waterbody closure process, an idea FOAM will advocate, if only to bring up the question of what triggers and timeframe are appropriate to open a river up again. Keep an eye out for this topic in future FOAMLINe issues.

## UNLICENSED OUTFITTING LEGISLATION

### *MOGA, FWP Propose Steep Penalties, Fines*

As part of the 'Enough is Enough' campaign to halt illegal game taking and unlicensed outfitting, MOGA has teamed with FWP to talk about changing current laws to increase the penalty for unlicensed outfitting from a misdemeanor to a felony (in certain circumstances) with commensurate fines and possible loss of hunting, fishing, and trapping privileges.

From FOAM's perspective, the minimum threshold of \$1000 in compensation tied to felony status could be a problem, since an unlicensed outfitter could take a couple one-day trips worth between \$350 and \$425 per day and still face only misdemeanor charges. The FOAM Executive Director has talked with MOGA and FWP about altering the proposal to make single-day misdemeanor offenses cumulative, so that a person providing unlicensed services for three separate days would accumulate enough 'unlicensed practice time' to warrant a felony penalty. The alternates of \$1000 in cumulative fees or three days of unlicensed practice make more sense for our industry.

Proposed felony penalties state "the person (committing unlicensed practice) shall be fined not more than \$50,000 or be imprisoned in the state prison for not more than 5 years, or both." Also, "the person, upon conviction or forfeiture of bond or bail, may lose all hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses and permits and license privileges in this state for a period set by the court." FOAM and MOGA asked to add "outfitting" to the list of licenses denied a convicted unlicensed practitioner.

Last, "A person convicted of engaging in outfitting without a license shall reimburse the full amount of fees received to the person to whom illegal outfitter services were provided."

The proposed law would fit into Board of Outfitter

statutes, but be enforced by FWP wardens under their Memorandum of Understanding with the MBO. For legitimate outfitters who simply renew late, advertise at shows before receiving their licenses, or commit similar paperwork errors, FWP Enforcement head Jim Kropp has agreed to single out the typical characteristics of the true unlicensed outfitter to make sure they're caught, but leave alone licensed outfitters who are not practicing illegally. In any case, FOAM and MOGA will work together to make this proposal work well or kill the idea before it gets too far.

The FOAM board has yet to consider our role in this proposed legislative change, but it's on our fall agenda. If you have any comments, please send them to your director. Remember, this is a *proposed* piece of legislation without a sponsor as of this FOAMLINe's publishing date and is still in draft form.

When final details are worked out, FOAM will make copies of the proposed new law available on our website, [www.foam-montana.org](http://www.foam-montana.org) under the 'News' section.

## MBO PROPOSES BH2 GUIDE LOG RULE

### *Rule Proposed in Response to Outfitter, Warden Demand*

The Beaverhead, Big Hole Outfitters and Guides Association a while back proposed requiring guides operating on the BH2 rivers to fill out logs showing the names of the client(s), the outfitter who set up the trip, client ALS numbers, and the stretch they're using before they launch on a trip. BBHOGA members Russ Kipp and Bob Butler, along with FWP Warden Captain Coy Klein, asked the MBO to build a rule around this proposal. Their aim was to reduce the frequency of guides with independent contractor status acting as unlicensed outfitters by taking clients on trips the guide claims were authorized by an outfitter and, when questioned by a warden, showing a permit tag of one of the outfitters they may work for legally.

Although FOAM has worked hard to keep independent contractor status for guides, our directors are equally concerned about abuse and/or unlicensed outfitting by guides. The FOAM board will discuss this proposal when they meet again this fall.

Look for the proposed MBO BH2 guide log rule in the mail (assuming the MBO staff will mail one to all licensed outfitters and guides like they've done with other rule proposals) and send in your comments.

## MBO COMPLAINT PROCESS EXPLAINED

### *"What Can Happen To Me?" Most Common Question*

To help FOAM members understand what happens when a complaint is filed against them with the Board of Outfitters, here's a short discussion that follows a complaint through the process.

The MBO receives a complaint alleging that outfitter A has been sighted working outside his operation area on file with the MBO. A letter requesting a response and a copy of the complaint is sent to outfitter A, who should submit a letter in response to the complaint. If no response is submitted, the complaint still continues through the process.

The complaint and response, if any, go to the MBO Screening Panel, a group of three or four MBO members, to

determine whether an investigation into the facts is warranted, whether the board has jurisdiction, whether reasonable cause exists for issuing a Notice of Proposed Board Action proposing some kind of disciplinary action or if the complaint should be dismissed with or without prejudice. 'With prejudice' means the charge cannot be reconsidered in the future, 'without prejudice' means it can be reconsidered. The Screening Panel discussion is typically held in private to protect the privacy of outfitter A, as required by the Montana statutes unless both the complainant and outfitter A, the respondent, agree to waive their rights to privacy.

If the Screening Panel authorizes an investigation, the complaint is assigned to a Board Investigator (either Gail Keith or Dan Dellinger), who may interview either or both the complainant or respondent, outfitter A. The results of the investigation are presented to the Screening Panel at their next meeting, when the panel decides whether to dismiss the complaint or proceed with disciplinary action against outfitter A.

Next, a prosecuting attorney from the Department of Labor & Industry sends Outfitter A a Notice of Proposed Board Action and Opportunity for Hearing, typically including a Proposed Stipulation, a plea bargain setting out terms of discipline for outfitter A. Once this Notice is sent, it becomes public information and may be disclosed to the public.

Once outfitter A receives the Notice, he has 20 days to contest the action and request in writing a formal administrative hearing, or to agree, sign, date, and return the Notice and stipulation, or to work with the prosecuting attorney on another settlement. If outfitter A chooses to have a hearing, he is responsible for his defense and will face the prosecuting attorney before a Hearing Examiner who will weight the arguments and render a decision, which is then sent on to the MBO's Adjudication Panel.

If Outfitter A does not respond within the 20 days, the prosecuting attorney will prepare a Request for Entry of Default for Outfitter A. If A doesn't respond to the Request, the attorney issues a Final Order of Default for failure to respond or request a hearing.

If Outfitter A agrees to the stipulation or works out some other agreement, this stipulation or agreement is presented to the Adjudication Panel made up of those MBO members not on the Screening Panel. This separate panel considers the appropriateness of either the stipulated agreement between the prosecuting attorney and outfitter A or the Hearing Examiner's decision. If the panel agrees, the stipulation or hearing decision becomes part of a Final Order, a rendering of disciplinary action against outfitter A. Adjudication Panel meetings are typically open meetings because their discussion involves a Notice of Proposed Action that is already a public document.

So, how is the severity of discipline determined and what kind of disciplinary actions are imposed? The MBO uses a 'penalty matrix' that assigns points to a series of factors regarding any violation. Factors include whether or not the violation was made while serving clients, if a client was injured as a result of the violation, if the violation includes FWP violations, if the violation was intentional, if there were multiple violations or only one, whether Outfitter A has repeat offenses within 5 years, and whether there

were mitigating circumstances.

The points assessed the various factors involved in the specific case at hand are then totaled and the point total determines the type of discipline to be rendered.

Discipline available to the board ranges from a simple letter of instruction on how to comply with board laws and rules, a letter of warning (a step above a letter of instruction, though it contains similar instructions for compliance), low grade fines, fines and probation for various lengths of time (probation means the violator can continue to practice, but will be watched for future violations that break the terms of probation), up to license suspension and license revocation.

The Adjudication Panel may choose to 'stay' or set aside discipline warranted by the penalty matrix in favor of having the violator attend the board's "Remedial Education Class," which reviews in detail board laws and rules.

If you have any questions about the MBO complaint process, send an email to Wayne Johnston ([wjohnston@mt.gov](mailto:wjohnston@mt.gov)) asking for a copy of the MBO's complaint process brochure or check FOAM's website soon for a PDF copy of that brochure.

Generally speaking, the MBO is focused on licensee compliance and education rather than discipline. Education via the Remedial Education process, letters of instruction or warning, and fines coupled with probation are the most common penalties for minor mistakes.

## **FOREST SERVICE PUBLIC MEETINGS SET**

### *Reserved Water Rights Settled on Montana Forests*

The USFS has scheduled a series of 17 meetings statewide during October to take public comment on a draft reserved water rights settlement negotiated over the last 15 years by the Montana Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission and the USFS. Basically, these reserved water rights can assist the USFS for administrative and fire-fighting uses. The draft settlement also uses state law to create numerous state-based water rights for instream flow for 77 streams on USFS lands.

#### **Schedule of Meetings & Open Houses**

- 10/10 - Libby: 1-3p.m. City Hall, Ponderosa Room, 952 E. Spruce St.  
Kalispell: 7-9 p.m. Red Lion Kalispell Center
- 10/11 - Seely Lake: 1-3 p.m. Seely Lake Ranger Station  
Missoula: 7-9 p.m. Doubletree Hotel, 100 Madison St.
- 10/12 - Hamilton: 10 a.m.-Noon City Hall Community Room, 223 So. 2nd St.  
Philipsburg: 4-6 p.m. 212 E. Broadway, next to Post Office
- 10/13 - Thompson Falls: 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Thompson Falls Senior Center, 1191 Mt. Silcox Drive
- 10/16 - Lincoln: 1-3 p.m. Lincoln Community Hall  
Great Falls - 7-9 p.m. City Commission Chambers, Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts, Park Drive
- 10/17 - Stanford: 9-11 a.m. City Hall  
While Sulfur Springs: 2-4 p.m. Bank of the Rockies, 205 W. Main  
Helena: 7-9 p.m. MACo Building, 2715 Skyway Drive
- 10/18 - Ennis: p.m. Ennis School, Main St.  
Bozeman: 7-9 p.m. Museum of the Rockies, Hager Auditorium, 600 W. Kagy
- 10/19 - Dillon: 1-3 p.m. UM-Western, Lewis & Clark Room, Matthews Hall  
Butte: 7-9 p.m. Red Lion Inn, 2100 Cornell
- 10/30 - Billings: 7-9 p.m. Holiday Inn Grand MT, 5500 Midland Road

## FOAM WEBSITE RENOVATION UNDERWAY

### *Testing and Adjustments Needed Before Going Online*

FOAM is renovating our website in order to offer our annual membership application process online. It will not be available for this upcoming year, 2007, because it needs to be tested by our directors for a bugs and problems before bringing it to the members.

The changes will allow any current member to update his or her membership information online. User names and passwords will be created for each current member so they can access only their own information.

Outfitter members will be able to create or update their FOAM weblisting information online, including adding more text describing their operation and the ability to upload a picture or logo for their listing. This information forms a mini-website for those outfitter members who don't already have a website and want to get basic contact or service info out to potential clientele. About 20% of our outfitter members have used the FOAM weblisting system in the past, and we'd like to see more take advantage of our outfitter listing search capabilities. Check it out at [www.foam-montana.org](http://www.foam-montana.org)

New members will still use the regular form-and-check method to obtain their initial FOAM membership, but once they're entered in our membership database, they'll be issued a username and password so they can take advantage of the new features.

We will also maintain the form-and-check membership renewal process for those members who don't have access to a computer or simply trust pen and ink more than electronic bytes.

Systems have also been added that allow FOAM staff to administer the membership database, enter new member information, keep track of member changes, and update other information as necessary.

The FOAM board will discuss adding optional online membership dues payment. This will take a while to implement in a safe, secure way. Current payment ideas include electronic fund transfers from member bank accounts or use of an intermediary like PayPal to take credit cards or authorize funds transfers.

FOAM doesn't want to make online payment difficult, but we don't want any screw ups or intentional or unintentional tampering with bank or credit card information, either. The payment process must be simple, secure, and inexpensive; low transaction fees for handling member's payments are a must.

Online payment of insurance premiums is trickier - most policies must be signed, but our agents are discussing electronic alternatives such as the implied binding agreements we've all used for installing software or using specific online features. Also, like FOAM, the underwriter wants secure payments with no or extremely low transaction costs.

If you have any experience with online payments, please contact FOAM with your suggestions. Email [info@foam-montana.org](mailto:info@foam-montana.org) or call (406) 763 5436. Thanks in advance for your suggestions.

FOAM will announce the debut of its new website as soon as it is tested and ready, with or without online payment.

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