IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

November 2026 Commission Meeting ***Agenda Item No.:*** *5F*
Agenda Item: *Montpelier Reservoir Bag Limit Change for Illegally Introduced Bass* ***(Action)*** ***Supervisor Approval:*** *LH*
Presented by: *Lance Hebdon*
Position/Title: *Fisheries Bureau Chief*

Background:
Montpelier Reservoir is located in the Southeast Region and is a popular fishing destination. Anglers primarily target stocked rainbow trout, tiger trout, and kokanee. In addition, the reservoir supports self-sustaining populations of introduced panfish and native Bonneville Cutthroat Trout that provide additional fishing opportunity, and in the latter case native species conservation value. The 2025-2030 Fisheries Management Plan prescribes the management direction for rainbow trout and tiger trout as general, kokanee and panfish as yield, and cutthroat trout as quality. During summer 2026, staff became aware of the establishment of Largemouth Bass in Montpelier Reservoir likely from an unauthorized and thereby illegal introduction. Largemouth Bass are known to be an effective predator of trout and kokanee in small and medium-sized reservoirs. Predation by Largemouth Bass would counteract efforts to provide traditional and preferred fishing opportunities in this reservoir. Currently, Largemouth Bass are regulated under the regional general rule which includes a six bass bag limit, none under 14" within the 2025-2027 fishing seasons and rules booklet. Because this population is newly established, much of the population is young and does not exceed 14". Increasing angler harvest by removing bag and length limits and allowing spearfishing for Largemouth Bass in Montpelier Reservoir is a logical first step to reduce the predatory impact of this unauthorized introduction as other management options are considered.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:
Idaho Statute 36-104(b) provides the commission authority to set fishing seasons and limits.

Public Involvement Process:
No formal public input was collected. However, the management direction for this water was publicly vetted during 2024 while developing the 2025-2030 Fisheries Management Plan.

Justification:
This action allows IDFG to update the fishing season & rules in response to the unauthorized establishment of Largemouth Bass – a species that is likely to negatively impact trout and kokanee in Montpelier Reservoir.

Staff Recommendation:
The staff recommends that the Commission remove the bag and length limits and allow spearfishing for Largemouth Bass in Montpelier Reservoir

Suggested Motion:
I move the Commission remove the bag and length limits and allow spearfishing for Largemouth Bass in Montpelier Reservoir.