

Meeting Title: Big Wood River Working Group June Meeting

Date: June 24th, 2026

Time: 6:05 PM – 9:03 PM

Location / Platform: In-person, Community Campus (Minnie Moore Room), Hailey ID

Facilitator: Matt Corsi, IDFG

Recorder: Tucker Brauer, Mike Peterson, Matt Corsi IDFG

Attendees: Mike Peterson (IDFG), Matt Corsi (IDFG), Tucker Brauer (IDFG), Craig White (IDFG), Chad Chorney, James Harper, Ryan Santo, Tim East, Amanda Bauman, Greg Cameron, Kent Sanders, Bob Jost, Mike McKenna

Absentees: Dirk Zondag, Jr.

Non-Member attendees: IFG Commissioner Mike Roach

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- The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM by M. Corsi
 - IFG Commissioner Roach introduced himself to the group and expressed his appreciation for all the members' efforts toward the purpose of the group.
 - M. Corsi spoke about the goals of the meeting. Specifically, to provide the group with the history of management of the Big Wood River, the court case that led to current rules governing fishing here, and an overview of population monitoring data and the current status of the fishery.
 - Corsi introduced discussion of rules of engagement for the group and asked the group to continue to think about and discuss how certain group actions and discussions should be conducted. Member Chorney recommended the group use rules of engagement from other work groups throughout the state for consistency. IDFG promised to investigate what those were and present previous work group rules of engagement at a later meeting for reference.
 - A suggestion was made to use the first part of each meeting as a set time to share and discuss any public comment received about the Working Group by members or by IDFG. This suggestion was broadly supported by the group. The group then took the time to share any public interactions they have had regarding the Working Group.
 - M. Peterson (IDFG) shared a single comment received through the IDFG comment portal on the Working Group webpage regarding "Hoot owl" regulations and water temperatures.
 - Member Jost brought up the group, this working group to members of local fly shops to gauge their support for various items the group will deliberate on. He found broad support for expanded fishing seasons and simpler rule structure, but less support for changing harvest regulations in general.
 - Member Northen shared that he had spoken to multiple members of the fishing community about the reasons this group was formed.
 - Member East shared concerns over what expansion of opportunity may bring to the fishery in the form of additional use and whether that would be a negative effect on the fishery.

- At 6:20, T. Brauer (IDFG) shared a summary of the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting. The summary highlighted the common threads regarding opinions of working group members and areas where there will likely be more discussion needed to reach consensus. Broad support for year-round opportunities and simple regulations was observed. Support for maintaining or even expanding harvest was also observed, however, opinions of how that opportunity would be shaped differed widely among members.
- T. Brauer then presented on the history of management in the Big Wood River and described the court actions that led to the current rule structure for the Big Wood River fishery. Various questions were posed by the group for clarification and addressed by IDFG staff.
- M. Corsi called for a short break at 7:10PM
- Meeting resumed at 7:23 PM
- M. Corsi invited members to share observations and personal opinions of the Big Wood River fishery. Members were asked to share what they felt was happening with the fishery.
 - Member Chorney mentioned it's harder than ever to consistently catch larger fish. He mentioned when he first started fishing the Big Wood in 2005, catching 17-18" fish was relatively easy, now it is difficult. He suggested that water temperature and water quality may be a factor in the lack of trophy quality as those conditions are more common these days.
 - A question was posed to the group. "When did you start noticing smaller fish? Most members noticed this change after 2017, which was a great year for fishing, after which quality had declined consistently.
 - It was suggested that the lack of consistent high scouring flows in the BWR have led to filling in deep holes, which are important for growing large trout.
 - A member suggested that with the perceived increase in angler use, large trout are being educated, resulting in poor catch rates of large trout in the system.
 - A member asked IDFG whether management philosophy would change if improvements to river habitat were made that helped improve growth rates of trout.
- T. Brauer presented on the status of trout populations in the Big Wood River and data collected from IDFG monitoring over the past 30 years. Member questions were addressed by IDFG and discussed.
- M. Peterson agreed to send out links to annual reports with Big Wood River triennial survey data before the next meeting, for members to review.
- M. Corsi confirmed the date and location of the July meeting as July 29th, at 6PM at the IDFG Regional Office in Jerome.
- M. Corsi thanked the group for their attendance and participation, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 PM

Minutes submitted by: Tucker Brauer

Date submitted: 6/26/2026