

Meeting Title: Big Wood River Working Group May Meeting

Date: May 27th, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM – 8:55 PM

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

Facilitator: Matthew Corsi, IDFG

Recorder: Tucker Brauer, IDFG

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

Absentees: Ed Northen

Non-Member attendees: Peter Crow, Kenny Van Zant

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- The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM by M. Corsi
 - M. Corsi provided a brief welcome message and an overview of the meeting agenda. He then reiterated themes expressed by the group during the last meeting regarding the importance of the Big Wood River.
 - M. Corsi introduced discussion regarding “Rules of engagement” for the group. Suggestions were taken from group members as to how the group will interact with each other during deliberations going forward. Group put forward suggestions such as; no personal attacks, remaining objective and on-topic, and an agreement to complete assigned tasks on time. This discussion was cut short to stay on schedule, but M. Corsi encouraged group members to continue thinking about the topic as the rules agreed upon by the group will eventually be codified before proposal deliberations take place.
 - M. Peterson addressed the possibility of establishing a shared drive folder that members could access to share information with each other. However, a shared file with non-state employees on the states system may be a cyber-security risk and he needed to discuss the idea with IDFG IT personnel.
 - M. Corsi opened the floor to questions from the group before continuing with the agenda. The following questions were posed and addressed.
 - C. Chorney asked a question as to how the group will incorporate public comment into the deliberation process and stated the importance of doing so. IDFG provided the formal process for formal public comment on staff proposals to the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and the options the public have available to provide comments to this group directly before that point. It was agreed that inclusion of public comment will be decided as part of the “rules of engagement” finalization process to come.
 - R. Santo posed a question about timelines for deliberations, and the consensus from IDFG staff was that group recommendations should be finalized by November or December at the latest to meet deadlines for proposals to be considered and scoped publicly in 2027.

- The group took time to recognize Mike McKenna and allow him to introduce himself as he was absent from the first meeting.
- At 6:30 PM, M. Peterson began his presentation that covered the overarching philosophies and principles of IDFG Fisheries Management as well as the core values and structure of the IDFG Fisheries Management Plan.
- A short break occurred at 7:30 PM
- At 7:45 PM, M. Peterson continued his presentation titled “Wild Trout Management in Idaho” to inform the group of what IDFG incorporates into its decision-making processes. Topics of this presentation included: Data collection, Population dynamics (recruitment, growth, and natural mortality and fishing mortality), angler exploitation, regulation proposal evaluation, and examples of regulations for wild trout fisheries statewide.
- M. Peterson then presented the specific management objectives and strategies for the Big Wood River as described in the IDFG Statewide Fisheries Management Plan.
- M. Peterson finished his presentations at 8:15 PM
- M. Corsi opened the floor to discussion of management practices in the Big Wood River
 - M. McKenna inquired about the compatibility of Brown Trout in the Big Wood River, followed by where pure Redband Trout are found in the system in relation to Brown Trout. IDFG suggested that Brown Trout are not currently a limiting factor of Redband populations and are not found throughout the basin where pure Redband persist. However, species specific management practices are a topic this group may deliberate on.
 - R. Santo asked the group’s opinion on Brown Trout in the Big Wood River, stating he leans toward managing for native Redband in lieu of Brown Trout. C. Chorney stated that Brown Trout may become more prolific if climate change shifts river temperatures to be more favorable to Brown Trout and therefore may become a more significant part of the fishery in the long term. He also stated that clients generally do not shy away from catching big Brown Trout when the opportunity arises, suggesting they are a valuable part of the fishery currently even though they are a small part of it in general.
 - Discussion was raised regarding whether Brown Trout would continually repopulate the lower reaches of the Big Wood from Magic Reservoir if numbers were reduced above Glendale Diversion. IDFG stated that in high water years, connectivity of the Big Wood to Magic Reservoir would likely allow this to happen and is likely how Brown Trout currently became established the upper Big Wood River.
 - T. East asked when triploid trout became the standard for stocking in the Big Wood River, the answer of which was 2013.
 - M. McKenna asked if there were other Redband Trout populations managed by restrictive or unrestrictive regulations that could be looked at as an example for their deliberations. IDFG could not provide a specific example that was relevant to the discussion but committed to researching the topic in Idaho and surrounding states where Redband persist.
 - Additional discussion of the defining characteristics of Redband Trout was had. Consensus was that they are highly resilient, prolific, genetically unique, and

occupy a large diversity of habitats throughout their distribution, many similarities between Redband and coastal Rainbow Trout.

- Spawn timing and discussion of whether current closures are actually protecting spawning Redband Trout in the Big Wood River were had. R. Santo offered to share spawn timing and duration data that Big Wood River Land Trust has been collecting for 5+ years to help guide that discussion at an upcoming meeting.
- M. Corsi ended discussion at 8:45 PM to respect the agenda timeline.
- M. Corsi reminded group members to think about topics discussed tonight and develop ideas for “rules of engagement” between group members.
- The next meeting date was set for Wednesday, June 24th from 6:00 – 9:00 PM at the Community Campus in Hailey (Room TBD). The agenda for that meeting will be provided in a couple weeks but will include a presentation from Tucker Brauer, Regional Fisheries Biologist, regarding the management history of the Big Wood River, population monitoring data, creel census data, and other management topics.
- T. Brauer assigned the group’s first homework assignment. Members were asked to spend the next two weeks becoming familiar with current rules on the Big Wood River and other trout fisheries statewide before writing out their initial thoughts as to how fishing regulations could be structured in the Big Wood River. These proposals will be summarized and reported back to the group at a future meeting to facilitate discussion of initial management ideas.
- M. Corsi thanked the group for their attendance and participation, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM

Minutes submitted by: Tucker Brauer

Date submitted: 5/28/2026