

STATEMENT OF REASONS

CHAPTER 22

WATERCRAFT REGULATION

W.S. § 41-13-218 empowers the Commission to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of W.S. Title 41 Chapter 13, Watercraft, § 41-13-101 through § 41-13-220 and W.S. § 31-2-101.

The Commission promulgates changes to Chapter 22, Watercraft Regulation, to establish rules and regulations governing registration, watercraft and safety equipment requirements and watercraft operation in the state.

This regulation will become effective January 1, 2026, following action by the Commission in July, 2025. The current Chapter 22 regulation will remain in effect through the 2025 watercraft season. Following action by the Commission in July, the Department will have three (3) months to print and distribute the 2026 Watercraft Regulation booklet.

Section 2. The effective date of this regulation shall be January 1, 2026.

Section 4. In subsection (c), existing language has been edited to allow for decals, other than for motorized watercraft registration purposes, to be displayed on the front half of the hull.

Section 9. In subsection (b), Torrey Lake, Trail Lake and Ring Lake in Fremont County have been added to the list of waters where the use of personal watercraft is prohibited. These three small mountain lakes are used mostly by campers, fishermen and families in the summer and fall. They are not very large and the vast majority of current use is non-motorized or small horse powered jon boats. Watercraft use associated with these lakes is primarily kayaks, canoes, paddle boards and small jon boats. Over the past couple of watercraft seasons, some personal watercraft use has occurred which resulted in safety complaints from kayakers, canoers, paddle-boarders and shore-fishermen. These lakes are too small to accommodate an increase in personal watercraft use. The Department has heard support from the public at large concerning these additions to the regulation and also have the support of all of the surrounding landowners in the area.

In subsection (d), Bryan Stock Trail Pond in Natrona County has been renamed Lake McKenzie but still refers to the same body of water. Little Soda Lake in Sublette County and Naughton Plant Pond in Lincoln County are no longer able to be managed as sport fisheries and no longer require prohibitions on the use of internal combustion engines in motorized watercraft. South Springer Reservoir in Goshen County has been renamed Springer (Goshen Hole) Reservoir south of the footbridge in Goshen County to more clearly identify this restriction area. Most maps today refer to this body of water as Goshen Hole.

In subsection (e), Buffalo Wetland Pond in Johnson County has been added. This is a city owned pond and is governed by a city ordinance prohibiting all watercraft. The North Platte River

from Kortes Dam to the Seminoe Road Bridge in Carbon County has also been added. This is a direct result of public feedback and concerns about providing a portion of this river segment for shore or wade fishing which is free from conflicts with floating anglers.

In subsection (f), clarification is being made to clarify that Renner Reservoir is in Big Horn County as opposed to Washakie County.

The name of the current Commission President and the date the Commission is expected to take action on this regulation have been updated.

Minor grammatical and formatting edits have been incorporated into this regulation which do not change the meaning of existing regulations.