

Meeting Minutes: Boat Registration & Outfitters Board Advisory Meeting

Date: February 11, 2026

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees: * Board Members: Chris Hayes (Chair), Ian McCreary, Gary Korell, Owen Miller, Larry Larson. Absent, Blake Jackson, John Schwalbe.

- **Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD):** Alan Osterland, Dave Zafft, Mark Smith, Kevin Gelwicks.
- **Public/Others:** Jared Koenig (Sheridan Community Land Trust), Chris Simonds (Wyoming Wildlife Federation), John Masterson.

1. Welcome and Board Recaps

The meeting was called to order by Chris Hayes. He provided a recap of the advisory board's initial phase, which focused on the first components of the legislation: **boat registration** for commercial operators and a reporting system for the commercial operators to report trips taken.

2. Boat Registration Update

Alan Osterland (WGFD) provided status updates on the registration process which rolled out on January 1st:

- **Total Registrations:** 100 people as of the meeting date.
- **Residency Breakdown:** 83 Wyoming residents and 17 non-residents (including operators from CO, ID, MT, NC, and UT).
- **Feedback:** Regional feedback has been generally positive, with reports of a straightforward process for operators on the Green River and in the Casper/Thermopolis areas.

3. Online Reporting Presentation

Dave Zafft (WGFD) presented a draft of the new **online electronic reporting system** for guided fishing trips:

- **Functionality:** The system will link to a user's Sportsman ID (SPID) and automatically populate registered boat sticker numbers.
- **Data Points:** Guides will select specific launch and takeout locations from standardized lists to ensure data accuracy for river reaches.

- **Submission:** Records are to be submitted at the end of a six-month reporting period (e.g., January–June, July-December).
- **Board Suggestions:** Ian McCreary suggested allowing CSV file uploads for outfitters with multiple guides to avoid duplicate data entry. WGFD will look into this for future iterations.

4. Future Recommendation: Outfitters Board

The board discussed the third major legislative component: recommending the future regulatory structure for commercially guided fishing. As per the statute passed during the 2025 legislative session, it requires the Advisory Board to report back to the Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources (TRW) interim committee by November 1, 2025.

- **Three Primary Options:** 1. Do nothing. 2. Bring fishing under the existing Wyoming Board of Professional Outfitters and Guides. 3. Create a new, fishing-specific Outfitters Board.
- **Current Status:** A formal recommendation was deferred last fall to gather sufficient data from the new registration process to support the final decision. This proposal was taken to the TRW interim committee meeting in September 2025 and accepted by the committee.
- **Timeline:** The board is working to finalize a recommendation to TRW by **late fall 2026** (approximately November) to align with the last TRW interim meeting.

5. Research and Next Steps

- **Interstate Comparisons:** The board will research how neighboring states (MT, ID) manage fishing outfitters.
- **WGFD Support:** Alan Osterland offered to ask Amanda McKee (Wyoming Board of Professional Outfitters and Guides) to present to the group regarding their current board operations.
- **Meeting Schedule:** The board proposed an **in-person meeting in early April**, potentially in a central location like Riverton or Casper.

6. Public Comment

- **Jared Koenig:** Expressed concerns regarding how enforcement would affect non-fishing recreational floaters. WGFD clarified that the regulations apply strictly to **commercial fishing operations** and do not restrict general public access or non-fishing recreation.

- **Chris Simonds:** Encouraged the board to consider a distinct board for angling to ensure proper representation and avoid a "bad marriage" with the existing big game board.
 - **John Masterson:** Commended the board's "measure twice, cut once" approach to the process.
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Meeting Adjourned: Chris Hayes moved to close; Gary Korell seconded.

Action Items:

- **Hayes/Osterland:** Finalize the April in-person meeting date and location.
- **Hayes:** Compile and distribute previous research on other states' outfitter boards to the members.
- **Osterland:** Coordinate a presentation from the Wyoming Board of Professional Outfitters and Guides.