

Meeting Minutes: Boat Registration & Outfitters Board Advisory Meeting

Date: June 18, 2026

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

Board Members: Chris Hayes (Chair), Ian McCreary, Gary Korell, Owen Miller, and Blake Jackson.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD): Alan Osterland Chief of Fisheries, Mark Smith Fisheries Management Coordinator, Amanda Fry Public Information Officer, and Valerie Taro Executive Secretary Fish Division.

Public/Others: Wyoming State Board of Outfitters and Professional Guides staff: Amanda McKee and Brandy Durante.

The meeting was called to order by Chris Hayes. The minutes from April 3rd were reviewed by the board.

A Boat Registration Update was given by Alan Osterland, Chief of Fisheries WGFD. The Department has registered 512 boats as of June 19, 2026. Wyoming makes up 79% (405) of the registrations. Colorado has 34, Idaho 28, Utah 19, Montana 17, Texas 3, Wisconsin 2, and Florida, North Carolina, Virginia and Washington each having 1 registration. As of June 15th, a total of 277 trips had been reported in the online reporting system. The following is the trip count reported by water:

Trip Counts Water Name

1: Alcova Afterbay

57: Bighorn/Wind River - Below Boysen Reservoir

5: Green River - Above Fontenelle Reservoir

4: Green River - Below Fontenelle Reservoir

3: Kortess Reservoir - Below Seminoe Dam

4: Miracle Mile

1: Miracle mile North Platte

8: New Fork River

1: North Platte River - Above Seminoe

132: North Platte River - Gray Reef to Dave Johnston

4: North Platte River - Miracle Mile

4: Salt River

53: Snake River - Below Jackson Lake Dam

Reports for January 1-June 30 are due by July 15th. Blake Jackson said most of his people plan to input their reports at the end of the first reporting period. Gary Korell asked if the Department had received any reporting from reservoir trips and Mark Smith confirmed no reports had been received. Alan stated there could be an increase in reported trips after June 30th.

Ian McCreary asked about getting the message to outfitters on reservoirs. He felt some might think the registration and reporting requirement only applies to river guides. Owen Miller asked about signage at boat check stations making boaters aware of the requirement to register and report trips.

Alan shared regions are reporting good overall compliance with registration. One region conducted a task force and found most people were aware of the requirements and were complying. There were a few resident outfitters who claimed they did not know about the new law. The most common violation is dash slip missing or sticker misplacement on the boats and trailers. One region reported 72% of trailers checked are displaying the sticker and 60% of vehicles checked are displaying the dash slip. The Department is still focused on education and awareness this year. There have not been any citations or warnings issued. Enforcement is making contacts and making sure people are aware of the requirements.

Blake commented they have noticed an increased enforcement presence and his team has been checked approximately 10% of the days they are out. He also estimated there were approximately 1,000 less trips on the river and speculates the new requirements have slowed non-registered or illegal operators on that section of river.

Chris moved the discussion into drafting a recommendation for the TRW Committee at their meeting in September. He asked what the consensus of the board regarding recommending an independent Fishing and Outfitting board or if the board would be open to joining the Wyoming State Board of Outfitters and Professional Guides. All members are in agreement an independent board would be more beneficial.

Chris stated after reviewing the budget materials provided by Amanda McKee from the Wyoming State Board of Outfitting changes would need to be made in order to meet the budgetary needs of a stand-alone board. Amanda stated they have just wrapped up their biennium budget and can share those numbers to give the board more details.

The board talked about presenting a second option of joining with the Wyoming State Board at the TRW meeting. The benefit would be a lower overhead since that board is established. Amanda reminded the board they do not have a software system. All applications and renewals are paper and reporting is an excel spreadsheet that is submitted by the outfitters.

Amanda shared the Wyoming State Board of Outfitting is exploring raising their fees. She will share a spreadsheet with potential revenue calculations based on registration numbers for the board to work with as they consider the potential structure of a stand-alone Fishing Outfitting Board.

Chris asked everyone to share their ideas, thoughts, and proposed powers/authorities for a fishing outfitting board (independent or under current board) to Chris via email/text within the next week regarding regulation of fishing outfitters/guides. The board will meet July 15 to prepare two proposed recommendations to present to TRW in September.

Ian suggested the board review the definitions of what is a guide and an outfitter and think about potentially adding "Independent Operator". He feels that would encompass more of the fishing guides/outfitters.

Chris asked what WGFD's role would be if there were a Fishing Guides and Outfitter board. Would the Department still be involved in registration of boats and the board would be responsible for regulating the guides?

Alan stated it would take legislation with both recommendations the board presents to TRW. He suggested the board could redefine the Outfitter program and become an all-encompassing board that would not be limited to just registration. He stated the Department would still be involved with the enforcement piece but agency focus would be to manage the resource and not the organization.

Representative Byron shared with Chris hope that the recommendation presented to TRW in September include structure of the board and general guidance of the board. TRW meets September 8-9. The board will present their recommendations at that time. Chris suggested the recommendation focus on defining the authority of the board and its role in the industry. Less focus should be spent specific regulations they would want to see put in place.

Chris asked when final trip numbers from the first reporting would be available from the Department. He is concerned if the trip numbers do not have a significant increase the feasibility of a stand alone board would not be practical. Mark Smith stated raw data could be available the first part of August, however meaningful data would take approximately 3-4 weeks to compile.

Alan recommended the board prepare their proposals then be prepared to select which proposal would be presented to TRW once the trip numbers were finalized by the Department. The board will need to meet prior to September 8th to finalize their recommendation and make any final adjustments based on the numbers they receive from the Department.

It was proposed that the next meeting should be scheduled July 15. The goal of the next meeting will be to develop two hypothetical recommendations. The first recommendation would be based on if the budget/registration numbers would be enough for an independent Fishing Outfitters and Guide board. The second would be based on becoming a part of the Wyoming State Board of Outfitting and Guides.

If this board is to request being considered as part of the Wyoming State Board of Outfitting Amanda and Chris agreed there would need to be one more public at large member, two Outfitter representatives from the Fishing and Outfitting board.

Gary asked Amanda to visit with their board to gauge their interest in bringing Fishing Outfitters and Guides to their existing organization.

Chris made a motion that each member compile a list of what the authority of an Outfitting Board would look like and send it to him before the next meeting. Ian seconded the motion. Members of the board will get this list to Chris before the July 15th meeting.

Call to public for questions and input:

Meeting Adjourned: Chris Hayes moved to close; Gary Korell seconded.

Action Items:

- Amanda to provide biennium numbers from Wyoming State Board of Outfitters and Professional Guides
- Amanda to provide spreadsheet she has prepared to analyze fee structures
- Board members to send Chris their suggestions on what the authority of the Outfitter board.
- Alan/Mark will compile and summarize registration/reporting data after the July 15th deadline for reporting.

Next meeting will be a virtual meeting July 15 at 6:00 P.M. There will be a second meeting approximately the 15th of August to determine what will be presented at the TRW Committee meeting. Chris asked the board members to check their calendar for availability.