



FISHING REGULATIONS PROPOSAL FORM

Waterbody or Fishing District: Ruby River, Region 3

Proposed change, addition, or deletion (for existing regs, include District Standard or Exception to the District Standard. Indicate new language in *italics*, deleted language with a ~~strikethrough~~):

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RUBY RIVER

Upstream from Ruby Reservoir

- Combined trout: all may be Cutthroat Trout.

Downstream from Ruby Dam

- *Catch-and-release for Rainbow Trout.*
- Closed entire year just below Ruby Dam (that portion of the Ruby River from its confluence with Ruby Dam outlet channel upstream to the dam, including the outlet channel).

Ruby Dam to Alder Bridge (Ruby Island FAS)

- *Catch-and-release for Brown Trout*
- *Open April 1 through September 30.*

Alder Bridge (Ruby Island FAS) to the mouth

- *Brown Trout: 1 daily and in possession, must be less than 18".*

Rationale (biological justification for proposing this change. Include how this change addresses a fisheries management problem):

Rainbow trout harvest is proposed to change from one fish daily to catch-and-release because of their limited distribution near Ruby Dam, near historically low abundances the past five years, and a population skewed towards old fish that has lower than normal recruitment.

Harvest of brown trout proposed regulations are based on their most recent recorded abundances. Based on historically low abundances below the 5th percentile of the long-term dataset between Ruby Dam and Alder Bridge (Ruby Island FAS), brown trout would be catch-and-release only and an angling closure to protect spawning fish and redds from trampling would be implemented from October 1st to April 1st. Based on densities between the 5th and 25th percentile of the long-term dataset downstream of Alder Bridge (Ruby Island FAS), regulations that allow harvest of 1 brown trout less than 18" would apply to Ruby River downstream of Alder Bridge (Ruby Island FAS); the brown trout harvest proposed in that section would only include fish less than 18" to protect older fish in the spawning population and focus harvest on pre-spawning age classes (age-2 and 3) that have a negative effect on the post-spawning survival of adult brown and rainbow trout.

Regulation Type (clarification, enforcement, conservation, relevancy, management plan, other):

Conservation: to provide conservation of sport fish.

Public Engagement (summary of any public scoping or outreach that has been completed as it relates to this change. Includes public meetings, sporting group meetings, surveys, etc.):

The proposed regulation changes were included as part of scoping in the 2022 adaptive management plan for the river. Scoping meetings were held with the Region 3 Citizens Advisory Council, George Grant Trout Unlimited, Chuck Robbins Trout Unlimited, Skyline Sportsmen Association, Anaconda Sportsmen Club, Beaverhead Outdoors Association, Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana, Montana Trout Unlimited, Big Hole Watershed Committee, Beaverhead Watershed Committee, Big Hole River Foundation, Ruby Valley Strategic Alliance, Ruby Valley Conservation District, Beaverhead Conservation District, Mile High Conservation District, Clark Canyon Joint Irrigation Board, and the Ruby Valley Water Users Association. The adaptive management plan and the associated regulation proposals were generally well-supported, although concerns were raised over the dates associated with spawning closures. As part of the adaptive management strategy, the public also generally supported implementing less restrictive fishing regulations once the population improves, and abundances increase to levels near long-term averages.

Nonbiological Information (is there an organized advocacy for this change, controversy, other information that decision makers should be aware, relevant MCA or ARM to justify this change):

None