

Idaho Fish & Game News

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Idaho Wildlife Summit Speaker: 'We Simply Cannot Fail'

By Shane Mahoney

The conservation movement in this country began approximately 120 years ago. The movement was led and founded by individuals who cared deeply about the natural resources of this nation particularly its wildlife resources. And they also cared deeply about their own traditions of hunting and wilderness experience. In essence they cared deeply about their country.

This movement established a system of policies, laws conventions and regulations that today we recognize as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. This remains the only continental framework of its kind in the world and has been spectacularly successful in recovering and maintaining wildlife populations throughout North America.

This system of wildlife conservation was essentially led and significantly maintained by individuals who supported

sustainable use programs of wildlife; however it was also supported by legions of other individuals, many of whom were not hunters.

Over time this broad coalition for conservation has become fractured, and in this fracturing lies great risk for the North American Model of conservation.

We know that there are many social, political and economic forces that are changing the landscape with respect to conservation in this nation and on this continent – massive energy developments, changes in demographics in society, the changes in the cultural makeup, the financial challenges that the nation now faces. All of these are significant influences that help support a decline in the support for the conservation of wildlife – a decline that we simply cannot afford to risk.

What has been especially critical in this regard is a decline in hunters and anglers, leading to a weakening of the conservation movement. Idaho recognizes these problems, and sees these trends and is concerned about the future; it has reason to be concerned.

We need to begin the process of reformulating a broad and deep coalition for the conservation of wildlife in this nation. We need to find ways to bring groups together, rather than force them apart.

Everyone, myself included, recognizes we can no longer do this alone. A house divided unto itself cannot stand. We need to forge a broad coalition of parties that will commit to wildlife conservation and do so with the same vigor as the founders of this movement did 120 years ago.

This is our challenge, and we simply cannot fail.



Shane Mahoney is a featured speaker at the August Wildlife Summit. *Photo courtesy of Shane Mahoney*

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Broad-Based Commitments are Key to Wildlife Conservation

When Meriwether Lewis and William Clark first set foot in southern Idaho, the sagebrush grasslands here teemed with sage-grouse.

Today those same birds are on the verge of being listed as an endangered species. Bringing back this icon of the West will require the kind of broad-based support that Shane Mahoney talks about in his piece on Page 1.

A variety of industry, private individuals and government agencies already support sage-grouse conservation efforts. They are a microcosm of the kind of support that Idaho Fish and Game is seeking to generate at the Idaho Wildlife Summit in August.

The sage-grouse, once a symbol of the wide open spaces of the West, has declined across much of its range, which spans 11 western states and reaches into Canada. The decline is mostly the result of loss of critical sagebrush habitat from many causes, including rangeland fire, invasive plants, and climate change, as well as land uses, such as energy development, suburban expansion, inappropriate livestock grazing and agriculture, and other developments that fragment or degrade sagebrush ecosystems.

The successful conservation of sage-grouse and their habitat in Idaho depends

on the commitment of landowners, resource users, and agency personnel to apply conservation measures, and to monitor and evaluate actions laid out in statewide and local sage-grouse conservation plans.

At the heart of the conservation effort is a dozen “local working groups.” The groups represent a broad range of interests affected by, and concerned with, sage-grouse management and populations. Group members include local landowners, individuals, nongovernmental organizations,

the Interior. The task force included representatives of agricultural interests, energy or mineral development interests, a local working group, environmental organizations, a sportsmen’s group, state and county elected officials and the public at large.

In Idaho, the sage-grouse has been a species of interest for well over a century, providing food, recreational and research opportunities. It has also been important to the region’s American Indian tribes for ceremonial and subsistence reasons. It remains an important part of the sagebrush community and is sometimes used as a measure of sagebrush ecosystem health.

Sage-grouse is a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found listing sage-grouse was warranted but precluded by other, more pressing, needs.

Historical sage-grouse populations in Idaho are not well documented. Before 1900 sage-grouse were not protected here. In the 1920s, wildlife managers voiced concerns about the future of Idaho’s sage-grouse.

In a trend mirrored in other western states, sagebrush habitat in Idaho has undergone substantial alteration and loss since European settlement.

In general, sage-grouse populations decline when large areas of habitat are altered or fragmented. Greater sage-grouse depend on large areas of sagebrush-grassland habitats with 15 to 25 percent sagebrush canopy cover for breeding habitat and 10 to 30 percent canopy cover for winter habitat.

A healthy understory is also an important component of nesting and brood-rearing habitat.



A greater sage-grouse male displays on a lek.

IDFG photo

representatives of industry, local government and state and federal agencies, ranchers, farmers, hunters, interested individuals, environmental and conservation groups.

In March, Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter established a 15-member Sage-Grouse Task Force to provide conservation recommendations to prevent the need for the federal protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The Task Force recommendations were submitted to the governor on June 15 and became part of a plan the state may submit to the Secretary of

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To Register for the Wildlife Summit

The Idaho Wildlife Summit is an opportunity for anyone interested to have a voice in how Idaho will manage wildlife in the future.

The Summit will convene at the Riverside Hotel in Boise and at six concurrent satellite sites in Coeur d’Alene, Lewiston, Salmon, Twin Falls, Pocatello and Idaho Falls. People also may participate online.

Participation is free, but registration is required because of limited seating. For information and to register online go to <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/summit/>, or contact the nearest Fish and Game office.

- **Boise** – 500 seats, main location – 208-465-8465 or 334-3746
Riverside Hotel, 2900 W. Chinden Blvd., Boise.
- **Coeur d’Alene** –100 seats, satellite location – 208-769-1414
North Idaho College, Lake Coeur d’Alene Rm., 1000 W. Garden Ave, Coeur d’Alene.
- **Lewiston** – 100 seats, satellite location – 208-799-5010
Red Lion Hotel, 321 21st Street, Lewiston.
- **Twin Falls** – 100 seats, satellite location – 208-324-4359
Canyon Crest, 330 Canyon Crest Drive, Twin Falls.
- **Pocatello** – 100 seats, satellite location – 208-232-4703
Red Lion Hotel, 1555 Pocatello Creek Road, Pocatello.
- **Idaho Falls** – 100 seats, satellite location – 208-525-7290
Shilo Inn Suites Hotel, 780 Lindsay Boulevard, Idaho Falls.
- **Salmon** – 100 seats, satellite location – 208-756-2271
Regional Office, 99 Highway 93 North, Salmon.

People who want to participate online do not need to register.

On-line Participation

People who want to participate on-line will need a computer with an Internet connection capable of receiving streaming video.

To join in, go to the Wildlife Summit page at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/summit/> and then click on the Wildlife Summit logo. It will take users to a site that includes a streaming video on the top left side of the screen; on the upper right is a box with a moderated chat room; bottom left is the Summit agenda with presentations and events; and in the bottom right is a link to the Fishing Polls with links to polling results.

Across the center are links to join streaming conversation; to enter poll responses; and to the Fish and Game website.

Idaho Fish and Game Policy

Idaho wildlife management policy is set by seven volunteer commissioners. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission’s policy decisions are based on research and recommendations by the professional staff of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and with input from the governor’s office, the state Legislature, hunters, anglers and the public.



Where to Participate

1. The main event will be at the Riverside Hotel in Boise.
2. Satellite events will be in Coeur d’Alene, Lewiston, Salmon, Twin Falls, Pocatello and Idaho Falls.
3. Anybody with an Internet connection will be able to participate at some level.

Ways to Participate

“**The Idaho Café**” is a simple, effective and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. It is high-energy, high-engagement and conversational, where ideas can be harvested. It includes a setting modeled after a café with small tables (four people per table), five compelling questions about what is important to participants, and a series of revolving, small group discussions at each table.

“**Fishing Polls**” allow individual participants to enter immediate and anonymous answers to a question by entering their responses through any device that has texting capabilities or an internet connection. These interactive polls will be powerful and exciting by providing immediate summaries to the survey questions. We will be able to segment responses by various groupings of participants, such as by age groups. The survey data can also be saved and analyzed later.

“**The Trading Post**” forum will give the participants face-to-face time with Fish and Game staff in order to gain a better understanding of how current Fish and Game programs benefit wildlife and of existing and future challenges facing wildlife conservation.

See Page 4 for complete agenda.

What to Bring

If you own one, bring your cell phone, smart phone, tablet, laptop, or any device from which you can text or on which you have an Internet connection.



Idaho Wildlife Summit Agenda, August 24, 25 and 26

Friday, August 24, 3 to 9:30 p.m. – All times in Mountain Daylight Time

3 p.m.	Trading Posts and Registration open
6:30 - 6:40	Opening Video – Dick Gardner, Master of Ceremonies
6:40 - 7:15	The Past, Present and Future of Wildlife Management in Idaho – Virgil Moore, Fish and Game Director
7:15 - 7:25	Fishing Poll: Demographic Info about Participants – Wendy Green Lowe, Facilitator
7:25 - 7:45	Fishing Poll: Participants take 2012 Idaho Citizen Survey – Wendy Green Lowe
7:45 - 8:20	Perspectives: The Future of Wildlife: Finding the Conservation Ethic and Nourishing the Democracy of the Wild – Jim Posewitz, Orion The Hunters' Institute
8:20 - 8:30	Fishing Poll – Wendy Green Lowe
8:30 - 8:45	Preview of Saturday and Sunday – Dick Gardner
8:45 - 9:30	Trading Posts

Saturday, August 25, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

8 a.m.	Coffee / Registration / Trading Posts
9 - 9:10	Opening Video – Dick Gardner, Master of Ceremonies
9:10 - 9:20	Gov. Otter's Video Message and Presentation
9:20 - 9:30	Observations from Yesterday – Virgil Moore, Fish and Game Director
9:30 - 10:05	Perspectives: Conservation Successes in Idaho: Working Together for Wildlife – Toni Hardesty, The Nature Conservancy - Idaho
10:05 - 10:15	Fishing Poll: (on perspectives from Toni Hardesty) – Wendy Green Lowe, Facilitator
10:15 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 11:20	Perspectives: Shifting Streams of Thought as the Basis for Conflict in Wildlife Management – Mike Manfredo, Colorado State University
11:20 - 11:30	Fishing Poll: (on perspectives from Mike Manfredo) – Wendy Green Lowe
11:30 - 12:20	Perspectives: A Nation's Legacy and Enduring Responsibility of Citizenship: Ensuring a Future for Wildlife and Human Engagements with It – Shane Mahoney, Conservation Force
12:20 - 12:30	Fishing Poll: (on perspectives from Shane Mahoney) – Wendy Green Lowe
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch
1:30 - 1:40	Video: Youth and Wildlife – Dick Gardner
1:40 - 4:00	Idaho Café – Conversations with fellow Idahoans about what's important to me, to you, for our grandchildren, what I can do and what we can do – Wendy Green Lowe
4:00 - 4:30	Observations and Wrap-up – Dick Gardner
4:30 - 6:00	Trading Posts and Social Mixer.

Sunday, August 26, 8 a.m. to noon.

8 a.m.	Coffee and Trading Posts
8:30 - 8:40	Video: Montage of the Summit – Dick Gardner, Master of Ceremonies
8:40 - 8:55	Observations – Virgil Moore, Fish and Game Director
8:55 - 9:20	Fishing Poll: Calibrating Results from Idaho Café – Wendy Green Lowe, Facilitator
9:20 - 9:45	Fishing Poll: Measuring Importance of Compass Goals and Objectives – Wendy Green Lowe
9:45 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 11:30	Panel Discussion: • Where do we go from here? • Challenges to participants • Q&A – Virgil Moore/Shane Mahoney/Toni Hardesty/Jim Posewitz/Mike Manfredo/moderated by Dick Gardner
11:30 - noon	Closing and Next Steps – Virgil Moore, Shane Mahoney, Dick Gardner