

Meeting Date: January 25, 2024

Agenda Item No. 14

Agenda Item: Fishing and Boating Access Program Overview

Bureau Chief Approval: LH

Prepared by: Eric Stark, Fishery Program Coordinator

Background:

The Department's Fishing and Boating Access Program manages 355 access sites including 186 boating sites and 169 fishing sites. The program strives to provide adequate and safe access to Idaho waters for a wide variety of fishing opportunities. Boating site development includes a boat launch or boat ramp, whereas fishing sites do not have boat launches or ramps. Site development may include access roads, parking lots, docks, and restrooms.

Funding is from excise taxes paid on hunting and fishing equipment through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program. Funding from the sale of fishing licenses provide additional funds for access sites in the following set-aside accounts: including Fisheries Sportsman Access (HB230), Family Fishing Waters (FWater), and Salmon and Steelhead (S&S) funds.

Sites are operated and maintained by regional staff including recreational site foreman and supervised by regional fisheries managers. Program management, grant administration, project prioritization, and by Fisheries Bureau staff at HQ.

The program leverages partnership to enhance access with approximately two-thirds of the managed sites on private property, owned by municipalities, counties, or other state and federal government agencies. Sites not owned by the Department are managed primarily through memorandums of understanding detailing responsibilities of management and maintenance.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Title 36-104 Covers Commission Authorities which include acquiring fee title or easements to lands or waters for public fishing.

Public Involvement Process:

Informational only.

Justification:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, recommendations, or other input from the public.

Staff Recommendation:

None. This agenda item is for Commission information.

Action Requested:

None.