

**Meeting Date:** July 24, 2024

**Agenda Item No.** 5C

**Agenda Item:** Elk Management Plan (ACTION)

**Bureau Chief Approval:** SR

**Prepared by:** Morgan Pfander, Regional Wildlife Biologist

**Background:**

Department staff have drafted a revision to the *Idaho Elk Management Plan 2024-2030*. The intent of this update is to set direction for elk management in Idaho and to function as the action plan for elk management activities through 2030. This management plan provides needed updates to current information and identifies major issues affecting elk management.

The Department continues to manage elk to provide abundant hunting opportunity, while deliberately addressing conflicts with livestock and agriculture. This plan has incorporated updated seasonal movement and migration data, new techniques to monitor elk populations, and provided information for partners working to improve elk habitat across the state. This revised plan will guide the Department in annual workload development and program prioritization and provide guidance on the development of season setting recommendations.

Staff presented an overview of the draft *Idaho Elk Management Plan 2024-2030* at the March 2024 Commission meeting. Staff will provide a review of public comments received on the draft plan and revisions made to the final draft in response to public input.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Species management plans are the guiding documents for management actions and are a direct reflection of the Department Strategic Plan. The *Idaho Elk Management Plan 2024-2030* will function as the action plan for elk management in Idaho.

**Public Involvement Process:**

The draft *Idaho Elk Management Plan 2024-2030* was posted on the Department website for public review and comment for 33 days from April 3 – May 5, 2024. The Department received 442 comments from 248 unique individuals and 3 organizations (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and The Idaho Wildlife Federation) submitted through the online webform, email, phone call, in-person conversations, and letters from the public and sporting groups. Of these 248 unique respondents, 91% were Idaho residents and 9% were non-residents. Staff will provide a more in-depth review and summary of public input at the meeting. Staff reviewed and considered all comments received. This input was used to make improvements to the draft plan and a revised final plan has been prepared for Commission review and consideration for adoption.

**Justification:**

The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommend the Commission adopt the *Idaho Elk Management Plan 2024-2030*.

Suggested Motion: I move the Commission adopt the *Idaho Elk Management Plan 2024-2030*.