

**Meeting Date:** January 25, 2024

**Agenda Item No.** 5C

**Agenda Item:** Jensen Acquisition (ACTION)

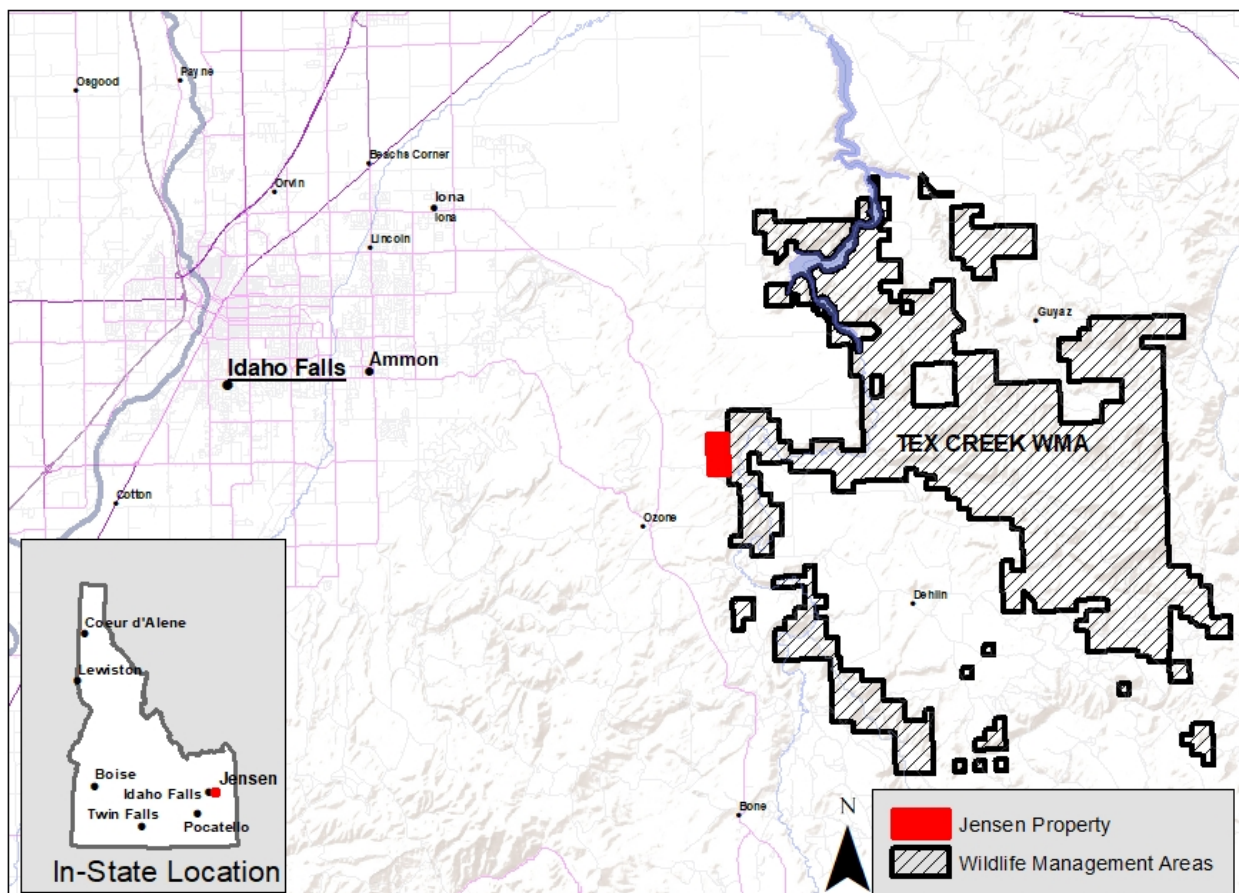
**Bureau Chief Approval:** SR

**Prepared by** Casey Pozzanghera, Natural Resources Program Coordinator

**Background:**

The Department is proposing fee-title acquisition of the Jensen property, a 328-acre parcel that borders the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area just east of Idaho Falls. The WMA provides important habitat (both summer range and terminal winter range) for many big game species. An estimated 5,500 elk and 3,000 mule deer from 6 adjacent game management units use the WMA, and this opportunity to expand the WMA footprint will help to protect that vital resource and create additional public access opportunities. In addition to big game, the habitat supports several species of upland game birds, including forest and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. IDFG staff are aware of sharp-tailed grouse leks in the area and expect grouse to use the property year-round. High quality aspen and riparian habitats throughout the property support a variety of other species throughout the year.

There is significant possibility of residential development in this area and the completion of this acquisition will help to create a buffer between the important habitat characteristics of the WMA and the increasing footprint of urban sprawl. This property will also provide additional administrative and public access opportunities to the WMA via a legal easement on adjacent private land from Kepps Crossing Rd.



The appraised value is \$750,000. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is contributing \$187,500 and the Department would use \$562,500 of Access Funds from the sale of Super Hunt applications to complete the acquisition.

Staff estimate maintenance costs would be under \$15,000 annually and Fee in Lieu of Tax payments to Bonneville County to be less than \$500 annually.

This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in May 2023.

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

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission has the authority to acquire land (Idaho Code 36-104(b)(7)). Land acquisition is in accordance with Commission land acquisition policy.

**Public Involvement Process:**

Bonneville County commissioners have been notified.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommend acquiring the 328-acre Jensen property in Bonneville County.

Suggested Motion: I move to acquire the 328-acre Jensen property in Bonneville County.