

**Meeting Date:** July 27, 2023

**Agenda Item No. 11**

**Agenda Item:** Gray's Meadow Habitat Restoration  
Project Update

**Bureau Chief Approval:** SR

**Prepared by:** David Leptich, Regional Wildlife Habitat Biologist

**Background:**

The 1,025 acre Gray's Meadow segment of the Coeur d'Alene River WMA (originally called Black Lake Ranch) was purchased by IDFG in 2017 with the intent of remediating (i.e., clean up) and restoring wetland habitat on the property. The Gray's Meadow restoration site was historically a 700+ acre floodplain wetland. Over the last 140 years it has been highly modified by mine waste contamination, ditching and draining, agricultural conversion, flood plain isolation, and the hydrology altered by hydroelectric development. Ecological restoration of contaminated sites under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (aka CERCLA or Superfund) and other programs is typically conducted as a two-part process wherein remediation precedes ecological restoration. Although there may be some coordination of efforts, remediation and restoration are planned and executed largely independently. We trialed a new approach at Gray's Meadow and created a "unified design team". That team includes professionals with a broad range of expertise from both the remediation and restoration disciplines. We collaboratively developed both conceptual designs and fully integrated and engineered remedial/restoration plans to clean-up contaminants and restore ecological integrity to the Gray's Meadow site. We are currently in the process of implementing those plans as a single project. This presentation provides an overview of our approach including project goals and strategies, supporting processes, and design features that isolate contaminated soils with the goal of maximizing ecosystem benefits while providing sustainable long-term management.

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

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through the Department, including land acquisition and management for the purposes of game, bird, fish, or fur-bearing animal restoration, propagation, or protection and to provide places where the public may fish, hunt, or trap (Idaho Code 36-104 (b) 7 (A&B)).

**Public Involvement Process:**

Property acquisition in accordance with Commission land acquisition policy. Public review of the CDARWMA management plan prior to adoption. Public meetings to review site specific remediation and restoration plans.

**Justification:**

This agenda item is for Commission information on the Department's efforts to enhance wetland habitat at Gray's Meadow, its history, progress, and current issues. This agenda item will enhance the Commission's understanding of the habitat work being conducted and aid them in responding to questions and concerns that may be raised by sportsmen, landowners, or the general public.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Not Applicable. This is an Information only agenda item.