

Meeting Date: November 16, 2023

Agenda Item No. 5E

Agenda Item: Scott II Land Acquisitions (**ACTION**)

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

Prepared by: Casey Pozzanghera, Natural Resources Program Coordinator and Steve Elam, Mitigation Staff Biologist

Background:

The Department is proposing fee-title acquisition of two parcels along the South Fork Clearwater River in Idaho County. The Scott II parcels consist of a 21-acre parcel just North of Harpster, ID owned by Scott Properties LP and a 15-acre parcel just South of Harpster, ID owned by Scott Revocable Living Trust. The two parcels are connected by a 10-acre parcel already under Department ownership that, when combined, would create a continuous 2.1 mile stretch of river front ownership.

This stretch of river provides important spawning and rearing habitat and is a key migratory corridor for multiple ESA listed game fish including steelhead, Bull Trout, and Chinook. It also has a strong population of mountain whitefish and cutthroat trout. Clearwater Regional staff estimate that this stretch of river receives 5,000- 10,000 hours of angler effort annually.

This stretch of river is dominated by private land, making angler access difficult. This acquisition would ensure access is maintained for anglers in a highly sought after and productive area of the fishery.

The combined appraised value for both parcels is \$185,000. Salmon and Steelhead set-aside funds would be used to complete the acquisitions. A tentative closing date is set for December 5, 2023.

Staff estimate maintenance costs would be less than \$1,000 annually.

These properties were previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in January 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:

Idaho County commissioners have been notified.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends acquiring both Scott land parcels.

Suggested Motion: I move the Commission acquire the 21-acre Scott Properties LP parcel and the 15-acre Scott Revocable Living Trust parcel.