

Meeting Date: July 27, 2023

Agenda Item No. 5G

Agenda Item: Adopt *2023 Idaho Action Plan (V5.0) – Improving Big Game Winter Range and Migration Routes* (ACTION)

Bureau Chief Approval: FE

Prepared by: Jacob Gray, Natural Resources Program Coordinator

Background:

At the Commission’s January 2023 meeting, staff presented an overview of the status and content of the *draft 2023 Idaho Action Plan (V5.0) – Improving Big Game Winter Range and Migration Routes (Action Plan)* and received approval to solicit public comments on the draft *Action Plan*. The *Action Plan* is intended to prioritize and guide efforts by the Department and its partners in conserving and managing big game winter ranges and migration routes within 5 priority areas across Idaho. Major issues that could affect big game winter ranges and migrations are identified, and overarching direction for conserving these habitats is provided. Staff will provide the Commission with a summary of public comments received and revisions made to the proposed draft *Action Plan* in response to input received.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Commission-approved plans guide the Department’s wildlife management and are an extension of the Department’s strategic plan. The *Action Plan* will serve as the primary document guiding the conservation of priority big game winter ranges and migration routes in Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:

The Department solicited input on the draft *Action Plan* from the public, interested groups, and other agencies. The draft *Action Plan* was posted on the Department’s website from April 3 to April 24, 2023. The Department received responses from 57 unique respondents with 81% (n=46) providing written comments. All respondents indicated Idaho residency. Fifty-four respondents (95%) indicated a level of support for the draft *Action Plan*, one respondent was not supportive, and two did not respond.

Justification:

The Commission sets policy and direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans. The *Action Plan* is proposed to guide the Department’s conservation of priority big game winter ranges and migration routes until revised, which is anticipated to be on 1-to-3-year intervals.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission adopt the *2023 Action Plan* as presented.

Suggested Motion: That the Commission adopt the *2023 Idaho Action Plan (V5.0) – Improving Big Game Winter Range and Migration Routes* as presented by staff.