

Meeting Date: July 27, 2023

Agenda Item No. 5.H.

Agenda Item: Peterson Property Acquisition
(ACTION)

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

Prepared by: Casey Pozzanghera, Natural Resources Program Coordinator

Background:

Department staff are collaborating with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to acquire fee-title to the 5.07-acre Peterson Property located at the confluence of Hayden Creek and the Lemhi River in Lemhi County. This area of Hayden Creek and the Lemhi River are key conservation areas for Snake River Chinook Salmon and Steelhead, along with Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout. This acquisition is part of a larger effort by IDFG, TNC, and other partner organizations to improve habitat and increase river access for anglers along a stretch of the Lemhi River that currently has very few public access points. The Peterson Property sits immediately across the Lemhi River from IDFG's Hayden Creek Access Site and just downstream from the recently acquired 58-acre Morgan Property. In addition, TNC is in the process of acquiring a conservation easement on an adjacent 176 acres of land owned by the Peterson family. This 5-acre parcel will provide public access to both Hayden Creek and the Lemhi River and will connect several properties currently under state ownership with multiple adjacent conservation easements to allow for improved habitat management and angler experience along a contiguous stretch of the Lemhi River. This property will also provide a new and improved location for an important rotary screw trap that is used to monitor Salmon and Steelhead production, but is currently located in a sub-optimal upstream location.

Under the existing agreements, TNC will acquire the property from the Peterson family and immediately transfer title to the Idaho Fish and Game Commission. Upon final Commission approval, Department staff will work with TNC to schedule a closing date for August or September 2023.

The appraised value is \$250,000. TNC was awarded ~\$202,000 of Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funds for the acquisition. An additional \$38,000 was provided as partial match by the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and \$10,000 of match will come from dedicated IDFG lands acquisition funds (commonly referred to as HB 530 funds).

Staff estimate maintenance costs would be less than \$1,000 annually and Fee in Lieu of Tax payments to Lemhi County to be less than \$100 annually.

This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in November 2021.

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:

Lemhi County commissioners have been notified.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends acquiring the 5-acre property.

Suggested Motion: I move to acquire the 5-acre Peterson property.