

Idaho Fish and Game Commission Annual Meeting - January 27-29, 2009

Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 South Walnut, Boise, ID

Note: Times on the agenda are approximate and subject to change.

JANUARY 27

7:00 pm Public Hearing — Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 South Walnut, Boise, Idaho

JANUARY 28

8:00 am 1. Opening Comments — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman

8:05 am 2. Agenda Changes — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman

8:10 am 3. Review of Public Comment — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman

8:20 am 4. Director's Report — Cal Groen, Director

8:40 am 5. Commission Reports — Commissioners

9:35 am 6. Consent Calendar (Action)

a. Minutes

b. [Financial Report](#)

c. [Winter Feeding Advisory Committee Appointments](#)

9:40 am 7. [Zero Base Budgeting](#) — Jim Lau, Chief, Administration

9:55 am 8. [Nongame Funding](#) — Jeff Gould, Chief, Administration

10:25 AM — BREAK

10:45 am 9. [Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report](#) — Gayle Valentine, Executive Director

10:55 am 10. [Legislative Update](#) — Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy

11:15 am 11. [Wolf Update](#) — Jim Unsworth, Deputy Director

11:35 am 12. [Presentation to Clark Fleege, Lucky Peak Nursery](#) — Chairman Wright, Director Groen, Mary Dudley-Volunteer Coordinator

11:50 AM — LUNCH

1:30 pm Commissioners meet with Senate Resources & Environment Committee,
Old Ada County Courthouse, 514 W Jefferson, Room 204, Boise, ID, 1:30 - 3:30 pm

ADJOURN

JANUARY 29

- 8:00 am** 13. [Crime Scene Investigation \(CSI\) Presentation](#) — Karen Rudolph, Wildlife Laboratory Biologist
- 8:30 am** 14. [Trophy Species Regulations for 2009-2010](#) (Action) — Dale Towell, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 8:55 am** 15. [Update on Chinook Salmon](#) — Pete Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager
- 9:05 am** 16. [Land Legacy Trust Update](#) — Gregg Servheen, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 9:30 am** 17. [Draft Pelican Management Plan](#) (Action) — Rex Sallabanks, Conservation Sciences Manager

10:00 AM — BREAK

- 10:15 am** 18. Executive Session I.C. 67-2345 (1) (b) (c) (f)

11:30 AM — LUNCH

- 1:30 pm** Commissioners meet with Senate Resources & Environment Committee,
Old Ada County Courthouse, 514 W Jefferson, Room 204, Boise, ID, 1:30 - 3:30 pm
- 4:00 pm** 19. Discuss Legislation — Cal Groen, Director
- 5:00 pm** 20. Executive Session I.C. 67-2345 (1) (b) (c) (f) (if needed)

ADJOURN

Individuals with disabilities may request meeting accommodations by contacting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Director's office at (208) 334-5159 or through the Idaho Relay Service at 1-800-377-2529 (TDD).

Meeting Date: January 28, 2009

Agenda Item No. 6b

Agenda Item: Financial Report

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jim Lau, Chief, Bureau of Administration

Background:

Update the Commission on the Financial Status of the Department

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

None

Justification:

None

Meeting Date: January 28-29

Agenda Item No. 10

Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background:

Staff will update the Commission about legislative activity since the December Commission meeting (teleconference), including the initiation of the 2009 Legislature.

In addition, Commission guidance will be sought for the following:

- Selection of a Commission liaison to the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation for 2009;
- Selection of a Commission legislative subcommittee if desired;
- Reconsideration of the 8 a.m., February 5 legislative conference call due to conflict with the Department budget presentation to JFAC.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Informational. Commission has authority to appoint subcommittee and liaison.

Public Involvement Process:

None.

Staff Recommendation:

Continue implementation of the legislative process already discussed by the Commission.

Justification:

Legislative process requested by the Commission.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2008

Agenda Item No. 11

Agenda Item: Wolf Update

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Jim Unsworth

Background:

In March 2008, Northern Rocky Mountain gray wolves were delisted and returned to state management authority. In July 2008, a federal judge issued an injunction against the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service decision to delist the Northern Rocky Mountain gray wolf, remanding wolf management back under federal regulations.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Current authorities for management of gray wolves in Idaho are provided through the Endangered Species Act and the 10(j) rule (revised in 2008) for nonessential-experimental gray wolf populations.

Public Involvement Process:

None.

Staff Recommendation:

None. This agenda item is to provide an update to the Commission on implementation of the Commissions wolf management directives.

Justification:

Information only.

Meeting Date: January 28-29

Agenda Item No. 12

**Agenda Item: Presentation to Clark Fleege
Lucky Peak Nursery Award**

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Mary Dudley

Background:

The Department will present an award to Clark Fleege, Luck Peak Nursery for exemplary service benefiting Idaho's wildlife by growing and processing seeds for native habitat restoration. The Department values the partnership with Lucky Peak Nursery and relies on their services to enable the Department staff and volunteers to restore wildlife habitat throughout Idaho.

Luck Peak Nursery provides essential services by propagating hundreds of thousands of native plants, processing and storing thousands of pounds of seeds and providing technical information.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Public Involvement Process:

Staff Recommendation:

Justification:

Meeting Date: 1/29/09

Agenda Item No. 13

Agenda Item: 13

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Heggen

Background:

Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) and forensic laboratory analysis presentation by Karen Rudolph, Wildlife Laboratory Biologist

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Presentation, for information only

Public Involvement Process:

N/A

Staff Recommendation:

N/A

Justification:

N/A

Meeting Date: January 29, 2009

Agenda Item No. 14

Agenda Item: Biological Rules for Moose, Sheep, and Goat

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Dale Toweill

Background:

Harvest proposals for trophy species, covering the coming two years, are presented to the Commission for approval in January of each odd-numbered year.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

None. This item is to establish statewide allocation of permits for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats for the 2009 and 2010 seasons.

Public Involvement Process:

Regional open houses statewide; news releases in all media outlets; information and questionnaire available on the Department's website. Public input will be summarized during presentation of the agenda item.

Justification:

Establish harvest opportunities for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat during 2009-2010.

Action Requested:

Approve 2009 – 2010 moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat rules.

Staff Recommendations:

Final recommendations will be provided during presentation of the agenda item.

Meeting Date: January 29, 2009

Agenda Item No. 15

Agenda Item: Update on Chinook Salmon

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Peter Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This is an explanation, to inform the Commission, of the forecasts for spring and summer Chinook salmon returning to the Snake River and the prospective salmon fisheries this spring. These salmon will begin leaving the ocean and entering the Columbia River in late February and early March. Fisheries staff will be returning to the Commission in March with recommendations for 2009 Chinook salmon sport fisheries to be conducted in the Clearwater River, Salmon River and Snake River drainages.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

None

Justification:

Keeps Commission informed prior to setting Chinook salmon fishing seasons in March.

Meeting Date: January 29, 2009

Agenda Item No. 16

Agenda Item: Land Legacy Trust Update

Bureau Chief Approval: JG

Prepared by: Servheen

Background:

The establishment of the Land Legacy Trust has been proposed by the Commission as a funding mechanism that will help secure financial resources that are needed to address the loss of wildlife habitats in Idaho. The implementation strategy to create and manage the Trust for habitat purposes was adopted in concept by the Commission during their May 2006 Commission meeting.

Since then the Department has laid the groundwork for the future sale of land assets and mitigation debt settlement that could establish or add to this Trust fund.

This Commission update will cover the status of surplus land disposal, settlement with BPA, and outreach and communications concerning the project. Staff seeks policy level direction that will help guide the implementation strategy used to create and manage the Land Legacy Trust.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Land acquisition and disposal, Fund investment and management, policy level negotiations

Public Involvement Process:

Open public meetings, news and press releases, public outreach

Staff Recommendation:

Assist the Department in forming policy to establish and manage the Land Legacy Trust

Justification:

Alternative funding that addresses a critical Department function – the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat

Meeting Date: January 28-29, 2009

Agenda Item No. 17

Agenda Item: Pelican Management Plan (Action)

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Rex Sallabanks, Conservation Sciences Program Manager

Background:

Numbers of American white pelicans, including adult nesting birds, have increased dramatically in southern Idaho since 2002. The increase in nesting birds has been documented at Idaho's two primary nesting colonies located on islands in Blackfoot Reservoir and Lake Walcott (Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge). Increases in pelican populations are generally considered as positive contributions to pelican conservation goals in the Western population segment, but the increased number of pelicans has also resulted in documented predation impacts on native cutthroat trout subspecies and other important recreational fisheries. The Department believes there is a need to develop an approach to manage conflicts in Idaho between pelicans and fish populations that balance conservation and recreation interests for both. This brief presentation will provide an overview of the management actions the Department proposes to implement to reduce conflicts between birds and fish in southeast Idaho. The Wildlife Bureau seeks approval from the Commission to solicit public review of this draft plan.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

This draft plan establishes management direction and provides objectives for pelican conservation. The plan contains both non-lethal (hazing birds, physical deterrents) and lethal (shooting birds, oiling eggs) management actions. Non-lethal methods could be implemented in 2009 following Commission approval of the plan. Because the American white pelican is federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, however, authorization from the USFWS will be required before lethal take beyond that already permitted could occur. The Wildlife Bureau intends to seek Commission approval of the pelican management plan in March 2009; following such approval, the Department will request USFWS authorization to implement lethal control components of the plan. Prior to taking any action on the merits of this management plan, public review and comment is necessary.

Public Involvement Process:

To date, there has been no public involvement in developing this draft plan. We are seeking Commission approval for a 30-day public review period. Following this public comment period, the Wildlife Bureau will analyze and summarize results for the Commission for future action on this management plan for pelicans.

Staff Recommendation:

The Wildlife Bureau seeks Commission approval for a 30-day public comment period on this draft plan.

Justification:

The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans. In order for the Commission to consider adopting this document as an official Department species management plan, public review and input is necessary.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2009

Agenda Item No. 6C

Agenda Item: Winter Feeding Advisory Committee
Appointments (Action)

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Brad Compton

Background:

Regional Winter Feeding Advisory Committees (WFAC) were established following passage of Senate Bill 1406 in 1994. Committees are charged with assisting the Department in implementing the Commission's Emergency Big Game Feeding Policy (attached). Committees exist in every region where emergency winter feeding is a normal occurrence (Southwest, Magic Valley, Southeast, Upper Snake, and Salmon regions). Committee members are appointed by unanimous vote of the Commission with appointments lasting 2 years.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code 36-123. WINTER FEEDING ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

(1) A winter feeding advisory committee shall be established for each district where winter feeding of antelope, elk, and deer normally occurs. Each committee shall consist of five (5) members. The members shall be appointed and removed for cause by unanimous vote of the Idaho fish and game commission. It is intended that the committees reflect the cross section of the major interest groups associated with each district. Each committee shall meet at such times as appropriate, but not less frequently than annually, on or before December 1, before the winter feeding season arrives, whichever is earlier.

(2) The term of office of a member shall be two (2) years, except a portion of the initial appointments may be for a term of one (1) year to provide staggered terms. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the balance of the unexpired term. The committees shall serve without compensation.

(3) Each winter feeding advisory committee established pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall appoint a chairman. The chairmen of the committees shall meet at least annually to coordinate activities and promote consensus on issues of common interest among the winter feeding advisory committees. The chairmen may elect a leader from among the chairmen to call meetings and conduct and coordinate activities of the group.

(4) The department of fish and game shall provide staff assistance and support for the committees.

(5) The committees shall have the authority to:

(a) Act as an independent resource in each district to give advice and recommendations on the administration of winter feeding programs;

(b) Act as a liaison between the commission, the department, interest groups, and the public on winter feeding issues.

Public Involvement Process:

Nominees are selected by Regional Supervisors with input from various stakeholders, including Department staff, sportsmen organizations, and local publics.

Staff Recommendation:

Appoint/reappoint WFAC members. Current committee members are provided on the next page. A final list of recommended appointments/reappointments will be provided to the Commission during presentation of this agenda item.

Justification:

Commission action required to appoint Winter Feeding Advisory Committee members.

REVISED: April 30, 1996

APPROVED:

TITLE: BIG GAME FEEDING POLICY (Deer, Elk, Antelope, Moose)

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission recognizes that the big game population should be maintained under natural conditions and by naturally available forage. Winter forage is the major limiting factor that determines the basic size of the big game populations and it must be maintained if these animals are to prosper and propagate. The Department will work with the appropriate land management agencies in an effort to maintain winter ranges in a condition suitable to meet big game management objectives, including the restoration of ranges damaged from such long-term impacts as disease, weed infestation, and/or overgrazing. These restorations could include temporary solutions for short-term impacts caused by fire and/or drought. In order to maintain these winter ranges, big game numbers must be controlled through adequate harvest. We, therefore, do not sanction any widespread supplemental winter feeding programs.

Big game animals, especially elk, when concentrated by supplemental feeding, are very susceptible to infectious disease, which can be transmitted to livestock and to other big game animals. Every effort should be made to lessen this threat.

We are aware that big game harvests and weather will vary from year to year throughout the state. In most years, snow depths, temperatures, and animal body condition do not create adverse conditions for wintering animals. However, there are times when unusual weather patterns may create critical periods of stress when winter forage becomes limited, unavailable, or animals are forced into areas involving public safety. We recognize that we cannot manage game populations for these extreme weather conditions--nor should we.

The Department is authorized to feed big game only if the following conditions exist:

1. To prevent damage to private property or for public safety when other methods of preventing damage and providing safety measures are determined to be impractical, inappropriate, or ineffective and the amount of damage or cost of protection is expected to exceed the cost of feeding.
2. To prevent the excessive mortality of big game populations in drainages that would affect the recovery of the herd. Some mortality should be expected, especially from the young and old segments of the population.

It is the responsibility of all field personnel to advise the regional supervisor of weather, animal conditions and numbers, and public input on situations that meet the feeding criteria outlined above. If the regional supervisor, in consultation with the regional winter feeding advisory committee, determines that the criteria has been met and that an emergency exists, he will inform the Bureau of Wildlife of his decision and the Bureau of Wildlife will notify the Director's Office, Bureau of Enforcement, and the Bureau of Information and Education. The regional big game operational plan will then be implemented.

Meeting Date: January 38, 2009

Agenda Item No. 7

Agenda Item: Zero Base Budgeting

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jim Lau, Chief, Bureau of Administration

Background:

Update the Commission on zero base budgeting process and timetable.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

None

Justification:

None

Meeting Date: January 28-29, 2009

Agenda Item No. 8

Agenda Item: Nongame Funding

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jeff Gould, Wildlife Bureau Chief

Background:

Idaho Fish and Game has always managed nongame wildlife to some degree, but formal funding began when legislation established the state's first income tax check-off on the 1981 tax form. The check-off allowed state residents to make a voluntary contribution to nongame wildlife programs, but it was not enough by itself to support nongame management.

In 1992, the Legislature authorized the wildlife specialty vehicle license plates with most of the revenue earmarked for nongame programs (IC 49-417). The bluebird plate became available in 1993, followed by the elk plate in 1998 and the cutthroat plate in 2003. About 94,000 plates have been sold with about 255,000 renewals in the 16 years the program has been in place.

Annual revenue from wildlife specialty plates and tax check-off to *Conservation Sciences* over the past few years has been close to \$1 million. This revenue was used to support basic functions and was leveraged by an additional \$1.6 million in federal and private grants (FY08).

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Wildlife Tax Check-Off IC 63-3067A(3)(a); Wildlife Specialty License Plate IC 49-417(2); Nongame Trust Account IC 36-111(d); Maintain a balanced budget for Conservation Sciences and continue to develop alternative funding mechanisms to ensure that those who benefit pay.

Public Involvement Process:

Survey statistics indicate that Idahoans are increasingly supportive of nongame wildlife conservation and 'watchable wildlife.' Approximately half a million Idahoans participate in wildlife watching activities on an annual basis.

Staff Recommendation:

Information only

Justification:

None

Meeting Date: January 28, 2009

Agenda Item No. 9

**Agenda Item: Idaho Fish and Wildlife
Foundation Report**

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Gayle Valentine

Background: Commission has requested updates about the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation activities.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: None at this time

Public Involvement Process: None

Staff Recommendation: Present update as follows.

Justification: Requested by the Commission

1. The 2009 Online Trip Auction has acquired Active Network as a major sponsor to help offset online auction expenses. Auction scheduled for February 27 through March 9, 2009.
2. The Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation welcomes new Region 3 board member, Joan Hill Yost from Boise, Idaho. Ballots are currently being gathered on a Region 4 candidate, C. David McClain from Buhl, Idaho. By February 2009, we will have 18 directors.
3. The Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation conducted their board meeting in Boise on December 5 and 6, 2008. The 2009 IFWF budget proposal was approved and passed by the Board of Directors.
4. The Board unanimously passed the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area Enhancement Fund MOU between IFWF and IDFG at the December board meeting. The purpose is to provide a mechanism for donations to a fund to be used to enhance wildlife habitat on the Craig Mountain WMA and support other projects defined in the MOU. The fund must first attain a minimum of \$10,000. The MOU has been reviewed by legal staff and signed by Director Groen.
5. Due to the downturn in the economy, the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation agreed to not fund 2008 project funding requests. Typically \$25,000 is allocated for selected project proposals. All applicants were notified in December 2008. The IFWF Project Funding Committee and the IFWF Finance Committee will discuss ability to fund 2008 projects in Fall 2009.
6. Foundation board members expressed an interest in partnering with IDFG in the decision-making for awarding revenue from the annual online trip auction.
7. The Foundation Wildlife License Plate Committee is conducting marketing efficiency with 2009 advertising for the wildlife license plates. The Committee will continue with major city-billboard advertising, monthly traffic reports in the Treasure Valley, and renewal postcards mailed to new and renewed license buyers. New for 2009 – purchasing new elk digitized plates to replace old elk design on a portion of the IDFG fleet. Reduction in spending is commensurate with decline in royalty fees used for plate marketing.
8. The Foundation has received a 40-acre conservation easement in the Boise Foothills.
9. The Foundation's next scheduled meeting is a teleconference call on Saturday, February 7, 2009.